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JANEY CANUCK IN
THE WEST

Janey Canuck in the West



BY

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WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT BY
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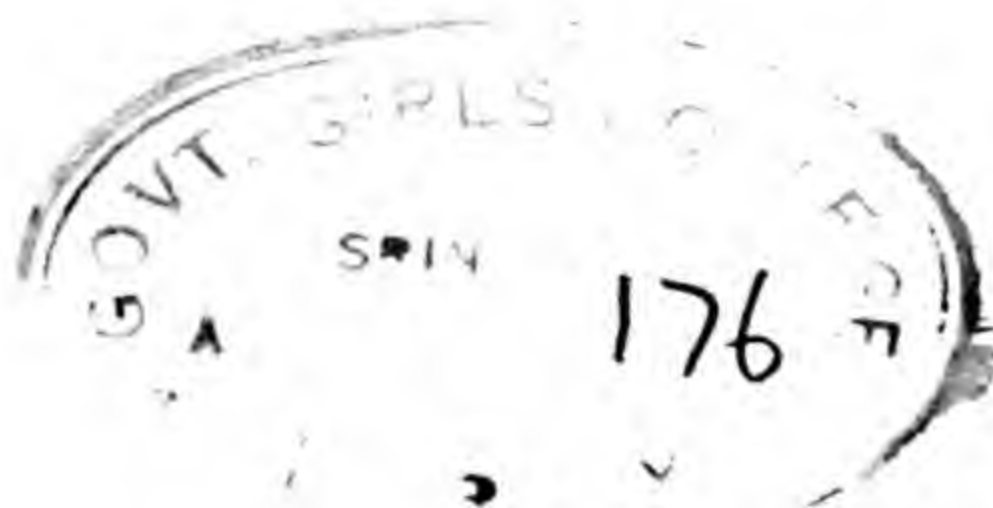
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TO

. ANNIE J. FERGUSON-BURKE

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JANEY CANUCK IN THE WEST

I

WESTWARD HO!



I THOUGHT I was a Christian," said Gail Hamilton, "but we've been moving."

It seems that ever since Mother Eve got notice to leave, moving has meant a domestic cyclone. This is what I said to the family, as I surveyed our house-

hold penates done up in "big box, little box, bandbox, bundle," to say nothing of crates, barrels, bales and baskets; but the family were too busy to pay any attention to me. They fail to appreciate the appalling fact that I shall have to locate all my books on new shelves. When, anon, I go to the fourth shelf, fifth book from the north side, to get "The Scarlet Letter," it will be to find "Pearson on the Creed" or Jevons's "Logic" in that identical spot. It means a moving of all my mental images—a changing of my geography, so to say. What a lot of knowledge runs to waste in the world!

In no way is your weakness of character

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so revealed to you as in moving. Upstairs and downstairs, and in my lady's chamber, you find heaps of stuff that ought to be burned, but you have not sufficient stamina to apply the match. You dilly-dally, vacillate, and halt between two opinions.

"Things are expensive in the West," you argue mentally. "They have not been kept the proverbial seven years." And so, because of the vague possibilities of vaguer needs in a problematic future, you cumber and incommode the present.

To move means a review of your whole life. Inside one little hour, you laugh, swell with pride, cry, grovel with humility and burn with indignation as the fingers of still-born projects, dead joys, or foolish frolics reach out and touch you from the past.

There are compensations, though. Things get cleaned up. You lose fifteen pounds of absolutely useless flesh. There is the secret and blissful consciousness of removing mountains and making things happen.

* * * * *

It is a big flit we are taking. The moisture in my eyes is purely the result of smoke from the engines.

Blessed old Toronto, the home of our love! You have been good to us. I cannot forbear kissing my hands to your

Westward Ho!

charm and beauty. To live with you is to "be happy ever after."

* * * * *

At five p.m. we found ourselves—the Padre, our two girls and myself—on board the *Athabasca*. She is a great white swan without a neck. They tell us she is "well-found," and "handy" in a storm. I don't know though. I never have time to look at anything but the engines—and, incidentally, the dining-table—when I am aboard ship. The pistons, wheels, belts, and shafts that strain and sweat and growl under the driving steam are an endless mystery to me. The greedy, glittering jaws and ponderous limbs of the weird monster hold me in an awesome but delightful spell.

The Padre says I show a "residual taint of the original state," whatever he means by that. I do not answer him, for all the while I am singing the song o' steam :

"The tail-rods mark the time.
The crank-throws give the double bass, the feed-
pump sobs an' heaves,
An' now the main eccentrics start and quarrel
with the sheaves ;
Her time, her own appointed time, the rocking
link-head bides,
Till—hear that note—the red return whings glim-
merin' through the guides.
They're all awa' ! True beat, full power, the
clangin' chorus goes."

As the sea-gulls swirled around our ship

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to-day in looping flight, I heard a little girl say they were really angels.

Some poet has thought this already :

“A gull—nay rather
A spirit on eternity's wide sea
Calling: 'Come thou where all we
Glad souls be.'”

As we watch them rise, quivering, falling, poising, and soaring like living fountains of wings, we wot that an angel could assume many forms less suitable and beautiful than that of a snow-white bird.

There is a Scotsman aboard whose chief aim seems to be the tabulation of all kinds of facts relating to Canada. Under the caption “Street Lamps of the Waterways,” he has the number of light-houses, fog-stations and fog-horns in the Dominion; also their cost of maintenance. He has noted that in the years 1870 to 1902 the deaths on Canadian and British sea-going vessels, in our waters, have been 5,247. We have been trying to figure out the chances against our landing safely. They are, we conclude, about 100,000 to 1.

The woman who sits by me at the table is a person of varied interests and many pursuits. She is short-breathed and long-winded. She has “a voice.” I mean one of those talking voices that continue to go through you long after the speaker has

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disappeared. She wants to know my age, my income, and how much I paid for my steamer-rug. She has a passion for "getting at the heart of things."

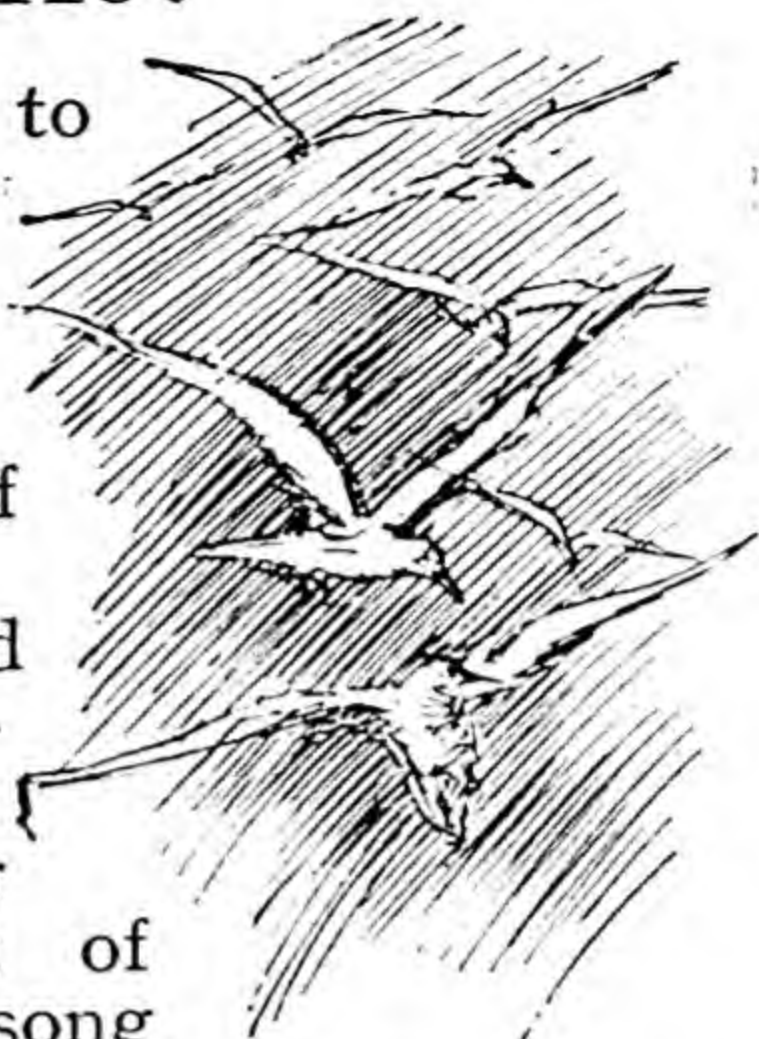
At nightfall a stiff wind blew up. There is nothing in the lake line superior to Lake Superior in a blow. I thought of certain characters in a song who "went to sea in a sieve they did, in a sieve they went to sea."

I am a most penitent traveller. Seasickness is an attitude which no amount of "new thought" can render graceful or dignified.

The Padre is one of those hateful people who are always well, even in a storm. He seems to think the malady amusing, and made himself objectionable by explaining to me the co-relation between she-sickness and nau-she-a.

On the second day we arrived at Port Arthur, at the head of navigation. My impressions? A green sea, a white ship, yellow sunlight, a city built on seven terraces!

A visit to the Canadian Northern Railway elevator at this port gives one, more than any other place, an idea of



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the enormous output of the Western wheatfields. In a glib way we talk of "millions of wheat," but it is only when we look at the space it takes to hold a million bushels that we begin, in any measure, to comprehend the meaning of the words. I had to climb eighteen flights of stairs to look down the bins. I tried to explain to my guide that this was a magazine of cereal stories, but my little joke was quite lost.

The storage capacity of the building makes the enormous total of seven million bushels. The grain is held in huge circular towers or bins, each being eighty-five feet deep. It is an almost fearsome experience to look down their black cavernous depths. It gives one a nightmare at noonday. These giant bins are made of fireproof tiles which are set in bands of steel, embedded in cement. This makes the grain not only immune from fire, but also from heat. Fifteen cars of grain may be run through the elevators every hour. The process by which the wheat is elevated, cleaned, weighed and carried to its particular bin is a marvel of clever, but withal simple, mechanism.

The great bulk of grain grown in the North-West must be stored at Port Arthur. It is here one sees Canada's answer to the world's call for wheat. This is why elevators are of universal interest. It is

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not because they tell the progress of great companies, but in that they are chapters which mark the upward steps of our young land in clear, monetary gain, and consequently in knowledge, science, civilisation and all else for which wealth stands.

It is on these great mountains of grain, too, that the federation of the Empire will largely stand. Interdependent, the Colony shall feed the Motherland, and in return shall receive protection against the covetous claws of the world.

It has been computed that the wheat grown in Canada last year was sufficient to make a string of two-pound loaves which would pass around the world four times.

In China rice is life. In Canada life is wheat. We should throw wheat on our brides.

Who so great as to pen the song of the wheat? Who can sum up its epic? From its sibilant swish on the wide-flung steppes to its whir and crunch under the wheels of the mill, wheat sums up the tale of the race. Like love, wheat rules the court, the camp, the grove. It makes or breaks the world of men. Wheat is blood. Wheat is life. Who can sing its song?

II

OUT WEST



A

T Winnipeg, the new Canadian Pacific Railway station is going forward. We were dumped out of the train into a great block of people and

building material—hundreds of the former, tons of the latter. An hotel “tout” seized us, and seemed much grieved that we did not care to avail ourselves of his kindly services. We took a carriage, and our driver wanted to overcharge us, and then had no change. No one ever saw a cabman with change. The final argument was interesting, if not wholly edifying, but I felt like the old woman an American essayist tells about. She witnessed with arms akimbo a conflict between her husband and a bear. “Go it, husband!” she said. “Go it, bear! I don’t care which beats.”

How the sun shines here in Winnipeg! One drinks it in like wine. And how the bells ring! It is a town of bells and light

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set in a blaze of gold. Surely the West is golden—the sky, flowers, wheat, hearts.

Winnipeg is changing from wood to stone. She is growing city-like in granite and asphalt. Hitherto, banks and hotels were run up over-night, and had to pay for themselves in the next twenty-four hours.

Winnipeg has something western, something southern, something quite her own. She is an up-and-doing place. She has swagger, impelling arrogance, enterprise, and an abiding spirit of usefulness.

“What I like,” says an American to me, “is the eternal spunk of the place.”

Winnipeg is another name for opportunity. The wise men did come from the east. They are all here. Winnipeg is a city of young men, and youth is ambitious. It is called “the bull’s-eye lantern of the Dominion,” and “the buckle of the wheat belt.” If you want to please a Winnipegger, tell him the city’s growth is steady and healthy—not a bit of a boom about it. You will be telling the absolute truth at the same time.

On the streets of Winnipeg, there are people who smile at you in English, but speak in Russian. There are rushful, pushful people from “the States,” stiff-tongued Germans, ginger-headed Icelanders, Galicians, Norwegians, Poles, and Frenchmen, all of whom are rapidly becoming irre-

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proachably Canadian. In all there are sixty tongues in the pot.

The real Westerner is well proportioned. He is tall, deep-chested, and lean in the flank. His body betrays, in every poise and motion, a daily life of activity in the open air. His glances are full of wist and warmth. There is an air of business about his off-hand way of settling a matter that is very assuring.

Every mother's son of them is a compendium of worldly wisdom and a marvel of human experience. What more does any country want?

In the evening we went to church at Holy Trinity. The preacher was a theological professor from one of the lower provinces. I knew him once as a brilliant young student, and was pleased to see him mount the pulpit.

But, alas! "how the devil spoils a fire God gave for other ends!"

Our friend undoubtedly feels he has a reputation to keep up as a controversialist and dogmatist, and so turns the pulpit into a kind of theological fortification, from whence he pours down broadsides on the doubts and mooted questions which he imagines are greatly troubling us.

The fact of the matter is, few of us are puzzling over the "tangled Trinities," over these analytical, metaphysical aridities which may be picked out from what

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Hume would designate as the "speculative tenet of Theism." They are too much out of the beaten track, and besides, most of us are kept far too busy, week days and Sundays, fighting the world, the flesh, and the devil.

There are some of us—in truth, many of us—who do not care about the wonderful something in the future ; nor do we desire, in the present, morbid self-introspection and gloom. We ask the Church to teach us how we may live life *now* ; how we may have it in large, abundant measure. We want to know how to be strong, healthy and holy (wholesome), happy, and wise. And if there are other worlds we want the same things there.

On Monday we leave Winnipeg for Poplar Bluff, via the Canadian Northern Railway.

The country through which we are passing is as full of flowers as any paradise of Fra Angelico's. Mile upon mile is covered with a pretty purple flower that I do not know. I mentally catalogue it as the purple blossom the German prince in the fairy tale found on the hillside, and which he used to disenchant his love who lay in the old witches' cottage by the forest.

Millions upon millions of sunflowers, no bigger than my watch, blossom in a continuous bed.

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I never saw Madame Sunflower turn to the sun. The French have. They call her "Tournesol." Moore must have too, for he sings,

"The sunflower turns on her god when he sets,
The same look which she turn'd when he rose."

A heavy-necked "Commercial" who is sitting beside me has risked an inconsequential remark upon the weather, that introductory topic responsible for so much of the world's misery.

But it is always well to be civil to Commercials. They are experienced and knowledgeable men of the world—men of account.

This is one from the Land of Cakes. His speech bewrayeth him. I change the conversation from the weather to the sunflowers.

He is a canny chiel, this Scotsman, and tells me how the sunflowers may be utilised. The seeds, if roasted, will make a drink almost as tasty as cocoa, and, if ground into flour, make excellent cakes. Just before the flowers bloom, if well boiled, they will make a dish with a taste between the cauliflower and artichoke. Blotting-paper may be manufactured out of the seed-pods. The fibre of the stalk is useful for quite half a dozen things, and, when dry, is as hard as maple wood. The seedheads, with

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the seeds in, burn better than the best hard coal. The leaves can be used as tobacco. If planted in a malarial district, they are a protection against fever.

I bow in homage to you, Madame Sunflower!

The wild roses have fruited, and cover the low bushes like elfin bonfires.

The Commercial informs me that the flower of the prairie rose is a thermometer by which the knowing "agriculturalist" (he means "farmer") can tell whether the land has an exposure to the early summer and late autumn frosts. It appears the tiny, crimson point of the bud which protrudes from the calyx is very sensitive, and more easily blighted by frost than any other bud.

It is a pity prospecting emigrants from the East are not aware that Nature has placed so cheap and convenient a weather-glass to their hand.

I think the reason prairie flowers are more beautiful than their city cousins is because they are loosely ordered and



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simply grow out of the grass. Their setting is quite inimitable by art, in spite of all its cunning. The green world they live in sets them off.

To look long at this blaze of purple and gold is to be filled with a desire, in some way, to make it a part of one, to feel it in one's pulses, and live it out in the world. This must have been what Tennyson experienced when he said, "The soul of the rose went into my blood."

The architecture here is early Western style and possesses the high art of simplicity. The people are in such haste to get to work they have no time for building houses, and so are content with shells—"shacks" they call them. They are such houses as Thoreau described as a tool-box with a few auger holes bored in it to admit light, and a hook to fasten down the lid at night.

The stoutly-built Galician homes, while by no means arts-and-crafts mansions, are not so inartistic as the tool-boxes in that they seem to grow out of, or fit into, the landscape.

The life on these isolated steadings must fit Gogol's description of the sleepy life at Ostankino, "where each door had a separate sound as it turned on its hinges, conveying a distinct articulation to those who could comprehend it."

Here and there, we come to a field fat

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with growing crops. There is actually room for myriads of emigrants in this district. In the words of the good old Sunday school hymn,

“Thousands now are safely landed
Over on this golden shore;
Thousands more are on their journey,
Yet there's room for thousands more.”

There are only three trains a week up this line, and, as yet, there are no Pullmans or dining-cars. At Portage la Prairie and Dauphin the conductor accommodately waited while we had dinner and tea. The meals were substantial enough in all conscience, but when they were served it was almost time to get back to the train, and so we ate as if our lives depended on it—“one feeding like forty.”

We reached “Poplar Bluff” * at midnight after two wretched days and two equally wretched nights of travelling. Our trunks were missing. We were assured they would come on the next train, three days hence. The sidewalk at Poplar Bluff is full of holes. The Scotch Commercial fell into one of them on his way to the hotel. He must have hurt himself, for I heard one of the denizens of the place say,

* I have placed “Poplar Bluff” in quotation marks because this is not the name of the place, but it will do as well as any other name.

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“Well? Are you ever going to come out of that —— place——?”

If you are in search of dirty hotels you can scarcely go amiss here. Whichever one you go to you will wish you had gone to the other.

Our room had a sad-coloured carpet, the smallest washstand ever seen outside a doll's house, and a looking-glass that distorted our faces.

We slept with some pestilent insects, unchristian in temper and carnivorous in habit. They made me think of the ants mentioned by Pliny and Herodotus, which were not so large as a dog, but bigger than a fox.

Nor was the *table d'hôte* more to our taste. When the lumber-jacks have finished feeding, the table-cloth looks like a map of the world done with washes of yellow, brown, and blue. If you are of an inquiring turn of mind, you may satisfy yourself as to what each man ate by the stains around his plate.

The maid apologised for the drinking-water, saying the “microbats” made it dark coloured. The tea is a copperas-tasting decoction. The steak chews like the pneumatic tyre of a bicycle, and I expect to see the boarders die on their chairs by my side. There is nothing viler than “good, plain Canadian fare.” No, nothing!

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The discussion at our table at dinner concerned apple-growing in Manitoba. To hear these men talk, one would believe apples were the staple product of the province. These Manitobans would die rather than acknowledge that their province has been slighted by Pomona, and yet apples are as much a forbidden fruit here as in Eden.

A farmer in this district planted some young trees and took ninety-nine precautions to save them. He lost his nurslings on the hundredth. The field-mice burrowed beneath and cut the roots.

The wiseacres say the stupid fellow should have beaten a hard path in the snow around each tree.

Indeed, the Manitobans will acknowledge no province as their equal.

Manitoba is a corruption of two Indian words *Manitou napa*, "the land of the great Spirit." The Manitobans translate it more freely as "God's Country."

III

ACROSS THE LAND

"Let the plough therefore be going and not cease."—LATIMER.



WE drove to a neighbouring village to-day. On account of the stumps in the middle of the trails, it is almost the universal habit in this district to travel with two horses. Our devious route lay most of the way through forests of popples.

These trails wander free as the wind and lead to regions rather than places. They do not seem to have had any surveying, but to have been made after the manner the little maid's mother cut her frock—"by presume."

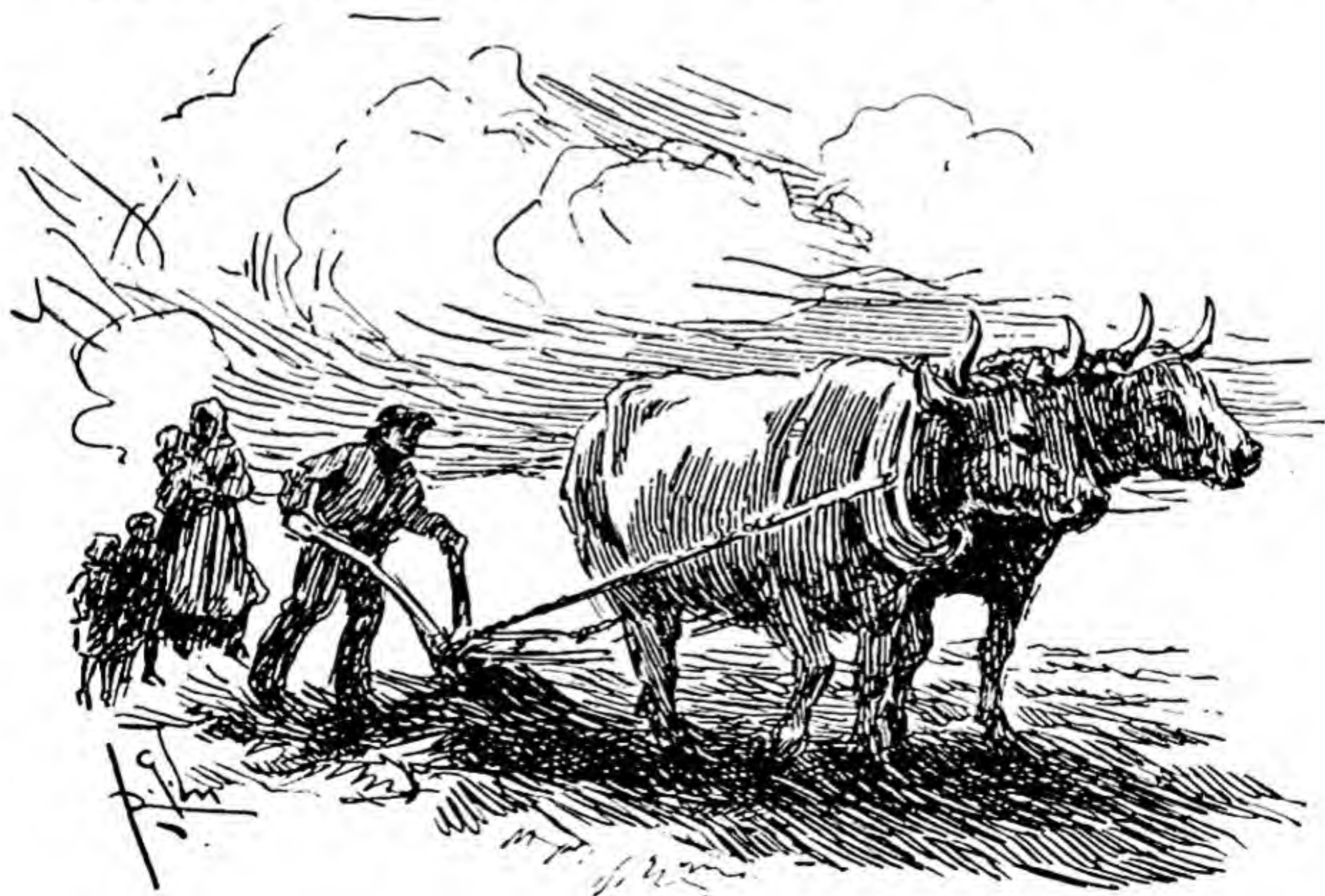
Sometimes, we came to a clearing with a little shack of logs, a cow-byre, and perhaps a herd of full-fed cattle, with calves frisking about in a series of grotesque and ungainly gambols.

In one blessed spot, a ginger-headed Icelandic giant was turning over his first furrow. The great oxen strained as they

Across the Land

pulled the share through the sod and brush. Behind, in the furrow, walked the mother and three little children. They were partners in this undertaking. It was a supreme moment for them. The turning of civic sod was never half so vital. They had crossed a hemisphere to turn this furrow. The steading was holy ground, and, metaphorically, I took off my shoes. These folk are of the "few elect." Thoreau was right when he said, "We want great peasants more than great heroes."

Along the trails the autumn flowers are mostly yellow. The land is a field of cloth-of-gold, such as any knight might



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have tilted upon. Gold is the note of my life to-day.

“All golden is the sunshine,
And golden are the flowers.
The golden wing makes music
In the long golden hours.
And dull gold are the marshes
And red-gold are the dunes ;
And gold the pollen dust is
Moting the quiet moons.”

The country hereabouts is alive with rabbits. Hitchy, twitchy, munchy things they are. The Indians call them *wahboos*, which means “the little white chaps.”

They are not so wild as Mistress Molly Cottontail down in Ontario. Indeed, they dawdle around, and take you in with a half-curious stare, as much as to say, “Well, Woman Creature, what do you want ?” Then they scuttle off to their warren sanctuary. One of the most delightful excursions in the world must have been that which Alice in Wonderland made into the rabbit-burrow.

This is “plague year” with the rabbits. It comes one year in seven. The plague is a bot which infests the intestines of the animals and kills them off in thousands. It also has a disastrous effect on the wolves who eat the diseased rabbits.

Being in no hurry, we put up at a village hotel. Allah be praised for a leisurely life ! The party ordered milk

Across the Land

and biscuits, but I had wine and biscuits. It was a sweet drink, full and heady—a ruddy port that harboured a kiss and reflected a glance. I drank one glass—one glass and a spoonful—and enjoyed to the full the unusual delight of *feeling* wicked that is only experienced by innocent people.

The hostess was a Frenchwoman. She related how, five years ago, she had walked two hundred miles to this place with her family, for then there were no railways or trails. It was delightful to hear her babble away in soft vowels accompanied by the shrug of her race, which means all things from total ignorance to infinite understanding. Her face is an elusive suggestion of a boy's and a woman's. She is a healthful-bodied, healthful-minded woman, with a fine way of hitting the nail on the head. Finally, her hospitality was as free as it was hearty. Angels could have done no more.

Coming home we were drenched. The rain had killed the "fatted cloud" for us. The trees were as quiet as whipped children, for the rain was scolding them. And when it stopped raining a miasmic mist chilled us to the very heart. A white



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mist in the north is a veritable death-sheet. Dante had proper insight when he made the Inferno foggy, and Tennyson, too, in "Guinevere," when he wished to presage unutterable sadness, told how

"The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still."

IV

VILLAGE LIFE



THE sword of Damocles, which has been hanging over these golden harvest days, has fallen. We had frost last night, and all the wheat in the valley has suffered. A German from whom we purchased some lime to-day says, "De Lord am trying to kill off de tam farmers, I can see dot." There! Somebody had to say it.

Being the first day of September, it is the time of paradise for dogs and sportsmen! Duck-shooting opened to-day. One cannot but feel a pity for those feathered creatures who are subjected at once to Nature, "red in tooth and claw," and to the Lords of Creation who carry guns. I have been shooting at a mark this last few days. The Padre says I keep my eyes shut, but he assures me it is not well to worry about it as this fact makes no appreciable difference to my aim.

Here in this little Western village one suffers for want of fruit, and must, perforce,

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substitute vegetables. I climbed a fence to-day to pull a yellow turnip. There were some geese in the field. I am always afraid of geese. They honk, and squawk, and quack, and hiss, and the more I "shoo" them with my skirts, the worse they are.

Inadvertently I stirred up the animosity of a wasp, too, and had to run with an impetuosity seldom seen outside a race-course. The Padre cut short the insect's ill-mannered career with his hat. Christopher North was inspired when he said that of all God's creatures the wasp was the only one eternally out of temper.

The turnip was good. All the wild blessings of the country are bottled up in the turnip. It has a more distinctive flavour than anything else we grow, and yet it is a flavour not easily described. Pungent, acid, and sweet are all applicable terms, yet none is wholly correct. As a complexion beautifier it is unrivalled. It acts on the skin like magic. When anyone declines to eat a raw turnip, it is a sure sign that he or she has grown old.

We also bought a yoke of oxen to-day. There are more oxen hereabout than horses. Our yoke cost one hundred and fifty dollars, but we had the worth of them in fun during the purchase.

The owner, a queer codger with a red, bibulous face, was anxious to place the

Village Life

good traits of the animals before us in the most favourable light, but in putting the oxen through their paces would burst into purple patches of vituperation.

"Go on, you blankety-blank, knock-kneed, cloven-hoofed chewer of cuds !

"Now, ma'am, can't they walk some ?

"Get out of the mud there, you stalled, lounging lump of wickedness !

"Yes, siree, Boss ! You needn't laugh. Them's the finest beasts in the valley. They're slick as shootin'."

I suspect it is true what they say out here : "No one can serve God and drive oxen."

This hamlet of Poplar Bluff, which is to be our home for at least two years, is not famous in history. Of course, it will be some day, the same as all other Western places. At present, it is only one of the many small villages with big names like Kitchener, Durban, Emerson, Mafeking, Roosevelt, Gladstone, and Cartier. Indeed, we are no longer in swaddling clothes, for our chemist has laid in a supply of blue and gold glassware decorated with the picture of our barber's shop, hotel, and butcher's stall. They are, "Souvenirs of Poplar Bluff."

They doubtless serve a purpose. Travellers who buy them will remember they were here.

You can get anything in the stores

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except the thing you want at the identical moment.

Each store is a departmental repository, a multifarious bazaar, where one may purchase blizzard-caps, hip-boots, blankets, guns, gloves, grain-bags, laces and larrigans, molasses and moccasins, shoes and steel traps, tea and tump-lines, tacks and thread. The prices are not extravagant either. Perhaps the biggest "beat" is our daily bread. It costs ten cents a small loaf. I have altered the Lord's Prayer to cover this item.

Everybody — literally everybody — in Poplar Bluff is in real estate. One would naturally think the supply of real estate would run out, but such is far from being the case. The villagers sell to immigrants, they sell to each other, and, now and then, the loan companies swoop down on the fold and give a helping-hand.

I do not know whether any are growing rich, but they say it keeps money in circulation. This seems an end greatly to be desired.

The clergy in Poplar Bluff are numerous enough to preach the Gospel to every creature. There are five, not counting the students from theological colleges who are here for the summer. The population is about three hundred. Still, this cannot be helped, for our mission boards must really make an endeavour to spend the

Village Life

money contributed by the very generous people "back East."

It is both costly and difficult to be clean in our burg. Circumstances are not calculated to encourage "the great unwashed." The only soft water available is caught in rain-barrels. About every fifth family has a well, and about every fifth well is usable.

Some of the households drink the water that drips from their refrigerators. This is considered the best—*No. 1. Hard*, so to speak.

On account of the cold winters, the water is not pumped but is dipped up in buckets. When the worst comes to the worst, a hole can always be made in the ice on the river, and water secured from thence.



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The houses in our village are built without the slightest reference to taste. They are stiff and ugly enough to serve as object-lessons for the crude. They are great wooden sarcophagi built solely to furnish shelter.

The Presbyterian pastor and his family of seven have been living in a one-roomed shack, but they have lately moved into more commodious, although hardly more beautiful, quarters.

The Baptist preacher's family is domiciled in one room with a "lean-to."

The Episcopal clergyman, a wide-awake young bachelor, has a two-roomed house and "boards around."

The Disciples' preacher is a carpenter, and so has a commodious house with clapboard exterior and gingerbreadesque ornaments.

Our own house is undergoing renovation. It is a hideous, card-board box that looks like a toy in which, if you lifted the roof, you would find jellies, fruits, or chocolates. I must not forget to mention that it is decorated on the gable with a blue and crimson sunset.

When we came to move in, we found there were no laths or plaster on the walls, because, forsooth, there are no plasterers here. The paper is put on over stretched cheese - cloth, and every time you lean against it, you go through and see daylight in the chinks of the outer shell.

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The men are at work doing better things for us. We shall have three bedrooms, a dressing-room, parlour, study, dining-room, kitchen, and servant's room. We have no furnace, bathroom, cellar, or woodshed. Perhaps we shall have these later, for the rule here seems to be to build from the top. The stone foundation is usually built after the house has been standing a year; later a cellar is dug out, and finally, as the family increases in wealth, or as they get leisure, a drain is added.

The hotels and shops are finished inside and outside with embossed and painted tin. The finish is as ugly as it sounds. This, I am told, is in deference to the underwriters. Besides, lumber is expensive, planed spruce-boards selling at \$26 per thousand feet.


Some of the houses have car-roofs. The name is exactly descriptive.

V

MORTUARY MUSINGS

“When the earth was sick and the skies were gray,
And the woods were rolled with rain,
The dead man rode through the autumn day
To visit his love again.”

—OLD BALLAD.



THE Padre bought some graves to-day, and is having them levelled. I argue that he could spend his money to better advantage. He flatly contradicts me, and claims that the first use of money, as far as we know, was for a burial, and the first sale of land was for a cemetery.

These graves were made here before the village cemetery was purchased. They are desolate-looking hillocks, but Pokagon stops digging to ask me,

“Wat de odds, Missus? One grave be comferable as anoder.”

The graveyard here is hard to find. It lies some distance off the trail, and its “shadowed swells” might almost be trodden over by the pedestrian were it

Mortuary Musings

not for a barbed-wire fence that belts one grave and a galvanised iron cross that heads another. The cross bears a type-written inscription, and is erected in memory of a Swedish woman who died only a month ago. The inscription, which is the composition of her husband, reads :

“No more thou are, and no one here are so to me in kindness. Such hearted breast, such lovely voice, no more on earth be found.”

I think, perhaps, this means something more than the epitaphic literature we Canadians are wont to select out of the stock-book belonging to the monument builders.

As I push back the undergrowth and read the inscription on the wooden “stones,” I am filled with a throbbing pity, for all the ages indicate that strong, young lives are throttled at their flood-tide.

The fascination of a cemetery is irresistible to me. The cemetery is populated with people who are always “at home.” I ask them foolish things. Are they really dead? Do they live again? Or is it we in the flesh who are dead? We who weep. We who sin. Is it we who are dead?

This graveyard is in a state of absolute neglect, and consequently is evidence of our low civilisation. The village cemetery, I take it, marks the degree of the village culture.

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Our dear ones go from the home circle to the open congregation, and their remains are a solemn deposit entrusted to our honour.

But, somehow or other, they are very, very dead, and the living are hungry, tired, impatient, and make many calls on us.

A shabby graveyard has its uses, though. It humbles us. We think we are of the utmost importance to our little circle of kin, and in truth we are, but it is astonishing how quickly the waters close over the spot where we went down. Our dearest will even say it was "a happy release," that we are "better off," or use some equally empty expression as a mere covering for a lack of sensibility.

VI

AUTUMN DAYS

 YESTERDAY was brimful of liquid sunshine. It was as good as gold—indeed much better than gold.

Since coming here, I have lost my old habit of insomnia, and am beginning to like the place better.

It reminds one of Winthrop's description of Acadia—"a land where sunshine never scorches and yet shade is sweet; where simple pleasures please; where the sky is bright, and green fields satisfy for ever."

Every one who writes from the East sympathises with me in this "Ultima dim Thule." I cannot say that I think as much of Thule as the people in it, but I am beginning to learn how much I can drop out of life without being unhappy. I find almost as much joy in losing my knowledge as I did in acquiring it. The 'ologies and 'osophies, the big causes, cultures, and cants are not so sweet to my taste as

"The lore o' men that ha' dwelt with men,
In new and naked lands."

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Yesterday, the vicar drove me to his two appointments. Our way lay for the most part through a forest with a prodigal luxuriance of undergrowth, but now and then we emerged into a stumpy clearing where the land looked smooth and fat. It is what they call in Manitoba "mellow" clay. That is, it turns over without sticking to the spade.

Walt Whitman apostrophises this country as "thou lucky Mistress of the tranquil barns." It will be many a day before this vicinity can be thus addressed. At best, the barns are 12 by 14 shacks, log-roofed, thatch-roofed, sod-roofed, roofed anyhow. Indeed, there is but little occasion for barns. The farmer stacks and threshes his grain in the field, and at once takes it to market.

At some of the bachelor shacks the men were hanging out their Sunday washing, and the garments disported themselves in the wind with an utter abandonment of decency.

The vicar thinks quite badly of the village girls because they refuse to marry the bachelors and live in these shacks. On the contrary, I contend that it speaks well for them. Any girl who was not wholly insane would prefer a brick-clad house with lace curtains, and perhaps a piano and a carpet-sweeper.

Matrimony is the only game of chance the clergy favour.

Autumn Days

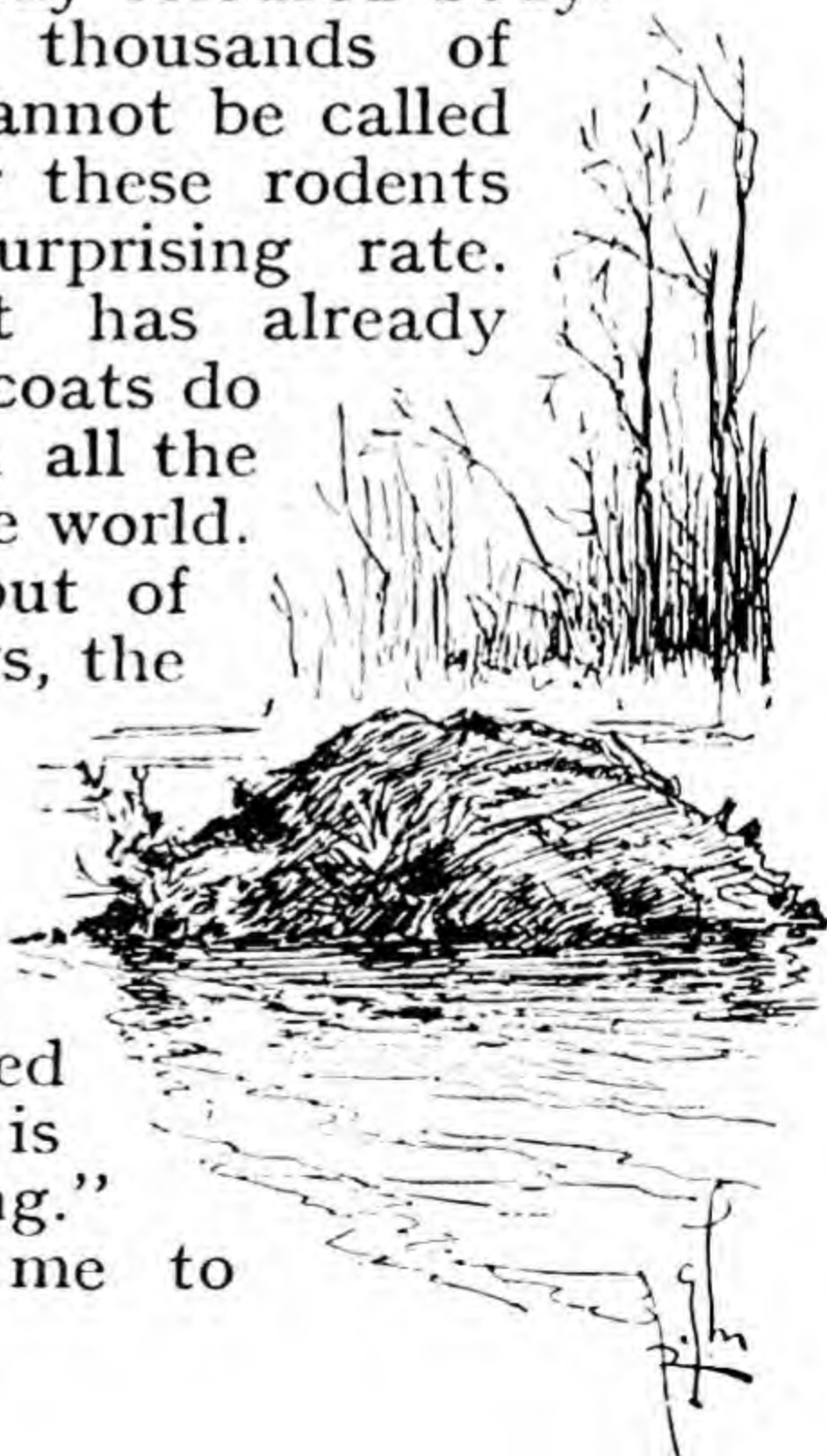
Besides, there are not sufficient village girls to go round. The unequal distribution of trousers and skirts in Canada makes countless thousands mourn, and so, perforce, the Eastern spinster and Western bachelor sigh vainly for each other like the pine and palm.

We stopped to examine a rat colony which was situated in the centre of a green, sluggish pond. Their houses, which are dome-shaped, are made of grass, moss, reeds, and sticks. The musquash travels with a queer, wriggling motion, has webbed feet, a flat tail, and a clay-coloured body.

The Indians trap thousands of them every year. It cannot be called a slaughter, though, for these rodents multiply at a most surprising rate. Besides, as Miss Laut has already pointed out, linings for coats do more to save life than all the Humane Societies in the world.

That I might live out of doors these autumn days, the Padre bought me a pony. It is a half-breed—perhaps only a quarter-breed—at any rate, a mongrel Indian pony. I have christened him "Shawna," which is Indian for "Sweet Thing."

His conduct leads me to



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believe that he is no more likely to measure up to his name than the youthful George Washingtons, Wesleys, or Albert Edwards we meet in all quarters of the world.

A more characteristic cognomen would have been "Paul," because he suffers not a woman to have authority. He fairly bowls along with the Padre, but once I mount he stands stock-still.

He has all the traits the vendor claimed for him—backbone and stamina, perseverance, grit, pluck, staying powers, and "sand." Indeed he has!

The Padre casts aspersions on my equestrianism, but this is because he does not like to acknowledge he was sold with the pony.

Peter Paulson, one of our workmen, is having trouble, too, with the oxen. They have been jerking him whither they would. He hitched them on the wrong side, got them astride a stump, or tangled up the lines. Peter did not like to dig on the canal we are making from the river to the sleugh where the logs from our timber-limit are to be boomed, so the Padre gave him a job as driver. He was a goldsmith in Copenhagen, but recently lived in Greenland. He has been in this country six months, and speaks our language well enough for all ordinary uses. I heard him call one of the men "Rubber" the other day!

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This afternoon he has been arrested for taking whisky to the Indians. One of the squaws imbibed freely, and this morning was found, burned to death, by the camp fire. She was Henry Brass's mother-in-law. Henry is digging on the canal. He came at noon to the house and asked me for a spade with which to dig his mother-in-law's grave. He was one of the revellers too, and will probably have to explain to the coroner.

Another of our men, Michael Peck, is in trouble. His "wife," who is also my scrub-woman, has been arrested and goes to jail at Portage la Prairie to-night, for trial. She tried to kill Michael last night with a razor. It should be seen that since the initial error of Eve a certain amount of "devil" has been apportioned to all flesh.

Three bears entered the village last night and partly demolished the carcass of a horse. They escaped without a shot being aimed at them.

Bears, moose, and other large animals are plentiful in this district. Over one hundred years ago, Daniel Harmon, a factor of the North West Fur Company, wrote that in this vicinity the animals were "moose, red deer, a species of antelope, grey, black, brown, chocolate-coloured and yellowish bears, two species of wolves, wolverines, polecats or skunks, lynxes, kitts, beavers,

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otters, fishers, martins, minks, badgers, musk-rats, and black, silver, cross and red foxes."

All these autumn nights the sky is aglow with northern lights. The youngsters assure me they are glory gleams from the angel children as they dance about the Pole. There have been other and less beautiful explanations.

'Tis a pity one cannot even approximately describe the aurora. Words stop short at form. They cannot translate colour. The aurora may best be described as "an intermediate, somewhat between a thought and a thing."

During the occurrence of this phenomenon, the telegraphic system is deranged, showing the intimate connection between these lights and the magnetism of the earth. The magnetic needle also deviates several degrees from its normal position, and it is most affected when the aurora is brightest.

I think the proximity of the magnetic pole has something to do with the superiority of the Northmen. The best peoples of the world have come out of the north, and the longer they are away from boreal regions in such proportion do they degenerate.

VII

PICKINGS ABOUT PIE



AM devoting my days and my nights to pie.

I heartily agree with Mr. Crossland, the English essayist, that, properly considered, the pie is one of the finest things humanity is capable of producing.

It has been my lifelong ambition to perform this culinary feat, and now I can make a pie—such a pie that, on tasting it, you will, as Brillat-Savarin says, “see wonders.”

My recipe? I just take a pinch o’ this, and a handful o’ that, and a squeeze of lemon juice—that most delicate acid Nature has ever distilled—*and then you have it.*

Stand back and look! It is the colour of the morning sunlight. Come near and smell! It is the distracting odour of the forbidden fruit. Shut your eyes! It is a dream.

Up to date, I have been president of thirteen women’s societies or clubs, but it required infinitely more boldness, more

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accurate calculation, greater finesse, and deeper insight to tackle the pie art.

Like Gail Hamilton, all I knew about a pie hitherto, was to know it when I saw it. But now!

My first crust was not a success. The same applies to several succeeding ones. But it was not my fault. The recipe did not say the water must be cold, and so, naturally, I used hot. It was tough enough (I mean the pie) to sew buttons on. Then followed a series with boggy foundations. The family called them "muskegs."

How hateful the family were! They would persist in tracing the origin of the word "pie," and would conclude that it comes from the Latin *pica*, from whose black and white aspects come "pied" and "piebald," and is the same "pie" by which printers describe type that is all jumbled up.

The word "tart" they traced back to the Latin *tortus*, meaning twisted. The twisting, they argue, refers rather to the effects of the tart than to its shape.

They gave it as their opinion that I had proved the falsity of the dictum that it was not possible to eat your pie and have it. And one day the Padre told a story of a philosopher who said:

"Tell me what people read, and I will tell you what they are."

"Well, there's my wife," rejoined the

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dyspeptic party. "She's for ever reading cookery books. Now, what is she?"

"Why, a cook, of course," replied the philosophy dispenser.

"That's where the spokes rattle in your wheels," said the other. "She only thinks she is."

My greatest difficulty has been to know how to decorate the edges. Sometimes I use a fork, and sometimes I scallop them with a spoon, but the impress of the latter looks too much like a thumb mark. I asked the milkman about it the other day. He is my most sympathetic friend and counsellor. He did not offer his opinion, but he told me a story of a certain mistress who, for the amusement of her company, wished to rally her servant upon the fantastic ornament of a huge pie.

"Why, Bridget," she said. "Did you do this? You are an artist. How did you do it?"

"Indade it was meself that did it," replied Bridget. "Isn't it pretty, mum? I did it with your false teeth, mum."

I have best luck with my Sunday pies. Once the Padre lectured me about it, but I got rid of him by putting flour on his coat.

He is quite wrong about Sunday pies. They are pious acts. It is quite possible for a pie to comfort the soul. I have proved it over and over, and so great an

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authority as Leach holds this view, too. He says that the small boy who interrupted a description of heaven to ask, "Do they have a good cook there?" had his finger on the foundation-stone of human happiness.

VIII



IN THE STING OF THE NORTH WIND

STARTED out with the Padre this morning for the timber-limit.

The thermometer stood at 48° below zero. It was a clear, shining day of pitiless cold—a day on which it is not difficult to understand the idea of sun worship.

They made me a bed in the sleigh. It consisted of a heap of hay, rugs, furs and pillows. In sooth, it was “a couch more soft than sleep.”

Sometimes our way lay along the beaten trails, and sometimes we crossed fluffy snow-fields of dead white, where the wind had brushed up drifts of fantastic sculpturing.

The supple undulations and exquisite curves of these waves of snow, held in the lethal grasp of winter, are always a joy to the eyes. They are wraith forms that never repeat themselves, and so prove a never-ending source of wonder and novelty.

Ahead of us drove a man in a Russian sled. His horses were rimey with frozen breath. The sled was infinitely more artistic

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than our Canadian cutters. It was painted black, with a horse rampant in white, and some queer, unconventional designs. The Canadian cutter, besides being ugly, is uncomfortable. It has not enough back or side support, and there is not sufficient room to stretch your legs. The seat is too big for one, and not large enough for two. It is provocative of rheumatism and kidney disease.

We passed a quaint, pleasing log house of octagon shape. It is not often the settlers care to take the time to attempt anything like elegance in their homes.

Here and there we were greeted by snarling, yellow curs, for all the settlers keep dogs.

Lapland snow-birds, in rustling bunches, rose up from almost under our horses' hoofs. These feathered sprites are white in colour, and belong to the family of finches. They build their nests on the ground because trees are not common in their homeland. They utter tiny chirps like weak fifes.

A snowy owl, perched on a dead tree, made a striking picture. By popular prejudice this bird is connected with night and black deeds, but I am told this species seeks its prey in daytime, its victims being rabbits, birds, mice and mink. Minerva sat on her perch with an odd air of gravity, and when the Padre raised his gun she

Sting of the North Wind

assumed a grotesque attitude, finally flying off with a half-wheeze, half-croak.

The Padre said he did not shoot out of deference for her. He believes there is something half human about an owl. I think, maybe, he is right. It is the only bird that has an external ear. A certain loresman declares that the owl was a baker's daughter. She sat up all night to make loaves for the workmen, who found her every morning blinking with sleep. By and by, she actually turned into an owl.

The rabbits are ubiquitous. Their numbers recall the story of a little girl who explained that when God made babies He made them one by one, but when He came to make rabbits He said, "Let there be rabbits!" and there were rabbits. They do not bother to hide as we pass by.

The chief enemy of these little rodents is the wolf. In one place we saw where Brer Rabbit had been killed and eaten. They themselves dine off poplar boughs. Wherever a limb falls they nibble off every vestige of bark.

I got out of my nest to hold the horses while the Padre shot at and missed a coyote. This "four-footed friar in orders grey" had histrionic ability. Sometimes he slunk along in devious, loop-like curves, and again he leaped into the air and stood stock-still. He is a regular Joey Bagstock of animals.

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"Sly, sir, devilish sly, is old Joe." One tries hard to think why this lurking, cowardly, complaining, white-toothed brute should have been sacred to the stalwart Mars.

No one seems to have understood the coyote so well as Bret Harte, who has described him as

"A shade on the stubble, a ghost by the wall,
Now leaping, now limping, now risking a fall.
Lop-eared and large-jointed, but ever alway
A thoroughly vagabond outcast in gray."

We stopped at Tibble's clearing to get warmed. They have thirteen children and a home-made furnace. The registers are the cracks in the floor. We exchanged courtesies. Mrs. Tibble gave me a tatted collar, and I have promised to send her a package of literature monthly.

We met a Mr. Bowles there. He came out from England last year. He told me that while hitching his horses to the sleigh this morning, the coyotes were so thick about him that he was afraid to turn his back lest they should jump on him. The Padre says his fears are wholly groundless, for the coyotes are cowardly and will not attack a man.

As we faced north-west, we saw Thunder Hill, a wooded mountain of indigo-blue aligning the horizon. At long intervals we passed bachelor shacks. The lives of these

Sting of the North Wind

men must be as lonely as that of Robinson Crusoe. They must possess a queer mental crotchet to thus isolate themselves. Fishes go in shoals, bees in swarms, cattle in herds, and the normal man is gregarious. Bacon has said, "Whoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a god."



I asked the Padre what he thought about it. He did not say, but told me that once a barber asked Webster how he liked to be shaved. The great man replied, "In silence."

I am still wondering if he meant the story to apply to the bachelors or to me.

Of a sudden, we saw a hurtling, quick-moving, compact mass on the trail some hundreds of yards ahead.

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“ Moose ! ” hissed the Padre.

I felt swift thrills up and down my spine, and a sudden tightness of the throat. It *was* a sight to see milord the Moose in his natural setting.

The Padre was too late with his deadly barrel, and glad I was, for the moose are “ God’s own horses.” Their lives are more interesting than their deaths. The Padre said I get moral when the grapes are sour. I retorted by telling him that a man with a gun is a savage. When we both calmed down, undeterred by his story anent Webster, I asked him a string of questions. He did not answer me till I reminded him that Archimedes was slain because he did not answer a question that was asked him. Here is the summary of his replies :—

The moose was probably attracted by the sound of our bells. Above all else the bull is curious. The Indians have a “ long call ” which they make with a birch-bark horn. It is in simulation of the cow’s call for her mate, but the Padre says it is not a good imitation and any unusual sound will “ fetch him.” This method of luring the buck seems treacherous. What odds that the buck is often brutal, a coward, or selfish ? It is not sport, and does violence to our social sentiments. Wherever an Indian kills a moose, he moves his camp thither. The moose “ yard up ” for winter.

Sting of the North Wind

Their chief food is the branches of the moose-willow. Indeed, their name is derived from the Indian word *mouswah*, meaning wood-eater. (N.B.—I am not sure of this. Perhaps the Padre coined the word to impress me with his knowledge.) The Padre says the moose also browses on the shoots of young spruce-trees. I am not sure of this either, for I have heard tell that the squirrel is the only animal that likes turpentine. Nature or evolution has endowed the moose with a wonderful nose, not only in size, but in acuteness of scent. This is why he is called the "Hebrew of the Woods." He has remarkable ears too, and hunters say that if you can feel his ears and nose, you can put salt on his tail.


Further on, the Padre shot a huge timber-wolf. It whirled round and round, and then, with a half-keyed shriek suggesting the lamentation of a lost soul, angled off into the brush, leaving a trail of blood. The Padre followed a short distance, but returned empty-armed, for the snow was almost hip-deep.

The timber-wolves are the only animals the Indians are afraid of. Their mode of attack is effective. They hamstring their man—that is, they cut the sinews of his legs—and so he falls a helpless prey.

IX

WITH THE DUKHOBORS

"Of course I am interested in my neighbour. Why shouldn't I be? That fence between us only whets my appetite."

 It was seven o'clock when we sighted the Dukhobor village of Vosnesenia. It is built on rising ground, and the site has been well chosen. The drainage is perfect. Ditches on either side of the village carry the water to a small creek that winds through the lowland.

Arriving at Vosnesenia, we went to Eli's house. He has frequently worked for us, and the Padre says his house is one of the cleanest and most comfortable in the village.

The houses are arranged on both sides of a wide street, and are foreign in every line. They are one-storied, and of unsawn lumber plastered with clay. They are whitewashed, and frescoed with vivid dadoes. Sometimes the roofs project into verandas, which are ornamented with carving. The blinds are on the outside, and consist of several thicknesses of hemp.

With the Dukhobors

These have a superlative advantage. Early callers know whether the inmates are ready or not to receive them.

The Padre went into the house to know if we might spend the night with them. I was presently surrounded by men, women and children, and borne triumphantly indoors, all the while feeling that I was being examined with a directness that was disconcerting.

They took off my headgear, fur coat, and golf-jacket, and finally tackled my footgear. Then they all laughed at the great heap of dry-goods I had shed. My hatpins afforded them especial amusement. They pushed them in and out of my cap many times.



When our "grub" box was brought in, I sallied to the kitchen to get tea ready. The stove was made of baked clay. It was what Mr. Arnold Haultain has described as "an ungainly but highly satisfactory stove." I put a handful of tea in the pot, and gave it to one of the women to steep. She poured half a cupful of water on, and then proceeded to pour it off. I was afraid of losing my brew, but



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Eli unnecessarily, for this was only to free the leaves of dust and other impurities — surely a laudable and sanitary precaution.

I cooked bacon in my own pan, and fried some potatoes. One of the little girls held her nose during the cooking process. Eli told me she did not like “the stank.”

The Dukhobors are vegetarians, and urge with their kind that we “make graveyards of our stomachs.” I explained to Eli that the Israelites ate angels’ food in the wilderness, and remained stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart.

“Me no understand,” said Eli. He is a sly fellow, this Eli, and does not like to be drawn out.

The table off which the Dukhobors eat is small. With them, dining is clearly not a function. They spread a white cloth over the table in our honour. They also set down a plate of their bread. In colour it resembled New Orleans treacle, and had we no fine stomachic sensibilities I am sure we should have found it highly nutritive. I do not know what they put in it, but should say its component parts are similar to those of bread I once ate in Germany, consisting of three parts

With the Dukhobors

especially prepared sawdust and one part rye-flour.

The women of the household washed my dishes. How many women were there? I do not know. There were four generations of them. Some of the houses have five.

The news had spread that we were in the village, and soon all the young men and maidens gathered to see us. They were taking us in, and it would doubtless have been a thorn in our pride if we knew what they thought of us.

The girls entered, and made a stately bow, which I must practise. It is beautiful. The women wear short postilion-like jackets of black sateen. Their skirts are short, and made without gores, being gathered in evenly all round the waistline. They nearly all wore aprons, the bottom of which had knitted woollen bands edged with scallops. They affected every colour, and even succeeded in blending purple, red and green in a happy triple alliance.

The unmarried women—even the baby girls—wear white kerchiefs on their heads, and the married women coloured ones. These kerchiefs are never doffed. I do not know why, but in likelihood to show they



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are unquestionably worshipful of their lords.

On the whole, their dress spells comfort. Their arm-holes are easy ; their skirts do not drag ; their bodies are not jails of bones and steels, and they wear no cotton-batting contrivances. "Jennie June" was right when she said the great art of life is to eliminate.

Most of the Dukhobors can speak a few words of English, and all are anxious to become proficient so that they may go to our villages to work. On this occasion, John, a young Dukhobor who had worked in a Canadian store, and who speaks English fluently, acted as interpreter.

I asked them to sing for us. Their music is not of the "popular" variety, and in volume would suffice for a marching regiment. All the sounds seem to come from their head and throat. They do not move their lips, or very slightly, so that I found it difficult to know who was singing. The airs are weird and vagrant. It is astonishing how long they can hold one note. The Dukhobors never use musical instruments. They sang the 77th Psalm, lullabies, and songs of freedom.

Perhaps Tolstoy described the motive of the peasant's song better than any one else. He says it is "an accessory coming of itself, without effort, and seeming solely to mark cadence."

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When I expressed a wish to retire, the guests bowed themselves out, and one of the women made our bed. It consisted of a feather mattress as soft as marshmallows, and a heap of pillows and blankets. The mattress was very short, being calculated to accommodate only the body and not the legs. It was laid on a wooden bench which was about five feet wide, and ran nearly all the way round the room.

The men retired to one apartment, the women to another, and Eli and his wife to a third. A woman and baby lay at our feet, and a boy opposite. The baby was placed in a square bed or box which was suspended from the ceiling, something like a bird-cage.

While I was undressing, the women returned and examined my clothing with apparent interest. My golf-skirt, with brilliant plaid lining, and my underskirts were handed round, rubbed between the fingers and commented upon. They seemed much pleased with the ribbons running through my underwear, but were shocked and, at the same instant, amused by my corsets. They nudged each other, grinned, and shrugged their shoulders. These corsets were of the long-hipped style, had two pairs of yellow suspenders, and carried a patent busk-protector.

Then they showed me what they wore.

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Taking all things into consideration, I wouldn't exchange.

After we lay down, the women returned once more with articles for sale. We bought some socks and woollen mittens. The mittens were white, and had white fleece knitted inside, making them as warm as fur.

Heavens! but the heat was awful. No Pullman car was ever comparable, nor baker's oven for that matter. The women kept piling on dry tamarack wood at intervals all night. I gasped and suffocated, and thought longingly of the dress mentioned by Rabelais as "nothing before, nothing behind, with sleeves of the same."

And the cat walked over me most of the night, for in an ill-guided moment I had fed it with meat, and so it was showing me some cupboard love.

The men were having breakfast when I awoke. They were dipping soup out of a bowl with wooden spoons. Each man had a huge chunk of bread. A plate of sliced turnips and a dish of baked potatoes completed their "halesome farin'." As I watched them eat, I thought of Bronson Alcott, "the tiresome archangel," who kept only "a chaste supply" of water and vegetables for his bodily needs.

Tea was the last course, and was served separately. The men stood with bowed heads, and returned thanks with pro-

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found and unaffected devotion before leaving the table. Even our unhallowed presence did not disturb them.

I had some of the soup for my breakfast. It was made of cabbages, onions, potatoes, and butter. The matter with it was that the onion was at its very worst moment. A raw onion is palatable, a cooked onion is toothsome, but an onion that has merely undergone a heat change is devastating in its effects upon the feeder.

They also gave me some eggs to cook, and a jug of milk. I gave them a peach pie in return. They threw away the crust because there was lard in it. After eating the fruit they pronounced it "no good." Almost every Dukhobor can say these two words.

The interiors of the houses are plastered and whitewashed, and decorated with da-does of brown and yellow. Coloured pictures and calendars are much in evidence. The floor was of clay mixed with mud, and seemed almost as hard as asphalt. The window sills were deep and flower-filled.

The system being communistic, the houses have only one door. It was Pat Kelly who said to the Liverpool detective, when the latter was looking for Fenians in his saloon :

"The back door was it your honour was looking for? Sure, the only back door is in the front."

Janey Canuck

One of the women was making a frock for herself. She used no thimble. I indicated to her with signs that might be useful to the Meisterschaft System that she ought to have one. She produced one from a cupboard and placed it on her first finger. I showed her that I wore it on the second, but she only laughed, and doubtless thought me very stupid and illogical. She seemed to be a nice girl, and bubbling over with what certain superior men describe as "womanly instinct." These thrifty women sew without machines, spin, knit, and make their own baskets and linen. They reap in the harvest fields too, and, if need be, can take a hand at the plough.

By unfriendly critics, much has been made of the fact that the Dukhobor women perform the arduous work of harnessing themselves to the plough, but this is entirely at their own suggestion.

At first the women were greatly in the majority, as their fathers, sons, and husbands were in Siberian exile, and much of the work had, therefore, to be done by the womenfolk. It was when only a few draught horses were available, and these were needed to haul logs from a distance so that homes might be built before the rigours of winter set in, that the women volunteered, with true Spartan fortitude, to break up the land.

May Agnes Fitzgibbon, in her bright

With the Dukhobors

letters to the *Toronto Globe*, speaking of these immigrants, has well said :

“ In the days to come one of the Russian artists in their midst will paint a picture which will be a source of pride to the descendants of these women who shouldered this burden with the same steadfast courage with which they have borne many others.”

Last season this village bought a steam plough, and the other villages are following suit.

Before leaving, I went into one of the houses to see the process of making linseed oil. The flax had been chopped, and the women were kneading the meal in troughs. The meal was heated in a large, shallow pan, and then subjected to great pressure under a jack-screw. The refuse, after the oil is extracted, is given to cows, but the children, too, licked it up greedily. The Dukhobors use this oil for various purposes, but mainly for cooking, in the place of animal fats.

As I watch the easy, muscular movement of the women kneading the meal, it is borne in on me that they have no special need of dumb-bells nor any reason to yearn for physical culture.

Dr. Johnson is credited with saying that much can be done



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with a Scotsman if you catch him young. The same would apply to the Dukhobors. The children are bright, receptive, and keen for work, and will be singing "The Maple Leaf" before another decade.

The boys are the same as other boys, in that they stare, wriggle, snuffle, grin behind your back, and are as hard to hold as quicksilver.

The girls are round, brown, and dimpled, and as well developed physically as their brothers.

They are not warm-happed, cuddled, and health-fooled like our children, and so infant mortality is not high among them. Overlooked, almost forgotten, these little wildings gather to themselves sap and sinew like children of the cave-dwellers. It is the shrewd way of God.

I am convinced that these people from the shores of the Black Sea will make excellent citizens. They do not steal—or very seldom—fight, drink intoxicants, smoke, or swear. Their lives are saturated with ideas of thrift and small economies. They hold themselves slaves of neither priest nor landlord, and their history is a story of sturdy struggling for independence.

People who are jealous, or misinformed detractors, have made much ado over their unfitness as settlers, and have evidenced their pilgrimages to find Christ as a proof.

Only twenty per cent of the Duk-

With the Dukhobors

hobors took part in this pilgrimage, and these were the dupes of a religious fanatic who posed as a prophet. But, as their kindly chronicler, John Elkington, has pointed out, they are not the first people to be made the victims of false teaching through their ignorance of the Bible. At any rate, we may safely say that any shortcomings these simple folk betray are mental rather than moral.

Elbert Hubbard, who visited them at the time of their pilgrimage, declared they were not fanatics, but merely Baptists gone to seed. In principle they are Quakers, but style themselves "The Christian Community of United Brotherhood," and are banded together with the primary object of maintaining the principles of peace and love to all men.

Their system is communistic. The crops and money are all stored in one fund. This practice cannot be set aside as entirely visionary and unworkable when the whole Christian Church kept it without violation for more than two hundred years. Besides, it is something very akin to this system that is advocated to-day by leading Socialists in all parts of the world.

There are some very apparent benefits in this Dukhobor method, too. The people are not isolated



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on lonely steadings miles and miles from anyone. This loneliness is undoubtedly the greatest trial our settlers have to endure. He was a wise statesman who said it was not a parish council the country needed so much as a parish circus.

In these Dukhobor villages, the people practically constitute one large family, and know each other's outgoings and incomings, fortunes and misfortunes. It is their habit to visit each other in the evenings, to sew, gossip, sing, or while away the time as wisdom may dictate or fancy lead.

Their system has another superlative advantage. The "wolf" is never at the door. Their storehouses have superfluities for none, but an abundance for all.

It looks, though, as if the iron of worldly ambition has at last got a wedge in their souls. The land which the Government allotted to them is about to be thrown open to settlers. The Government is wholly justified in this action. It is neither wise nor fair to leave a large area of country fallow and unproductive while other people need it.

But the forfeiture will probably prove too severe a strain on the principles of the community, and the likelihood is that the people will make entries for homesteads.

Their beautiful ideals will be whittled down by the jack-knife of all-pervading expediency. Their little Arcadias will be

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broken up, and presently their women, too, will be affecting hatpins, corsets, and yellow garters. The pity of it !

Hitherto the sciences and arts have been a quality unfelt, because unknown. They lost some few things ; but in losing they gained more. They were wise with the supreme wisdom of simplicity.

X

IN SASKATCHEWAN

"An' the silence, the shine, an' the size
Of the 'igh, inexpressible skies."

—KIPLING.



It was growing dusk when we left Vosnesenia for the Dukhobor saw-mill, our next stage on the journey northward.

We were now in the territory of Saskatchewan. Our road, at first, ran through a country of park-like character. This road has been cut by the Dukhobors, and is an excellent one. It is also marked out by mile posts. At six miles we came to a half-way house which has been erected for shelter, but we did not stop.

Further on, the road entered a forest. The picture was one of scant lighting and low values. All colour seemed to be bleached out of the earth.

Now and then the snow cried out in sharp resistance as the sleigh passed over it.

It was quite dark. The cold was cowering. I cuddled deeper into my blankets.

"The wood," says Tennyson, "is full

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of echoes, owls, elves, ghosts o' the mist, wills-o'-the-wisp. Only they that be bred in it can find their way o' nights in it."

Soon we had nothing to talk of. The Padre dropped into poetry and said, somewhat mournfully :

"With how sad steps, O Moon ! thou climbst the skies. How silently, and with how wan a face."

I accused him of pretending this apostrophe was a quotation. He assured me it was from an old sonnet which read "moone" and "wanne."

He was not to be set aside on the subject, and went on, telling me that Emerson said a man who has seen the rising moon break out of the clouds at midnight has been present, like an archangel, at the creation of light.

Then we spoke of Shelley's address to "the orb'd maiden with white fire laden," eventually swinging off to a hot discussion of Bacon's theory that all life is larger and more vigorous upon the full of the moon.

Our conversation soon took a lighter tone. The Padre said the man in the moon was there because he broke the Sabbath by picking up chips.

Now the Padre is always dwelling offensively on the matter of Sunday observance, because he disapproves of my making pies on that day instead of teaching Sunday school, and so I contended that the man

Janey Canuck

in the moon ought to be let down again, for it was just possible he lived in the North-West, and couldn't help himself. Besides, he probably had an exacting kind of wife who would not go cold, just as husbands won't go hungry. This nettled His Infallible Highness, and he said the man in the moon was a woman because of her changeability, and because she gets reduced to her last quarter every month.

My theory is that *he* stays there because *he* is a manufacturer of counterfeit silver, for *he* takes in no end of young couples every year. Besides, Mr. Zangwill is on my side. He gives it as his opinion that the moon has "a blank, idiot face," and that it should have been made a chronometer, with hands on it, instead of being left to stare at us so uselessly.

Before we knew it, the black forest recesses were echoing with laughter and jeers.

"Night steeped the passing of the day
In quiet, peace, and love,
While Dian in *her* tranquil way
Kicked up a shine above."

We reached the Dukhobor saw-mill at eight o'clock. It is situated on the edge of the timber-limits given to them by the Government.

On our arrival, our horses were taken from us and we made our way into a long

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barn-like structure, lighted only by a small, guttering lamp and the glare of the red-hot iron stove.

The men made way for us. I did not know I was cold till I got into the heat. Had anyone touched me, I would have broken in two. I could have cried out with misery and weariness. Of a surety, "women and gouty legs are best at home." Any fool can travel, but it takes a wise woman not to.

A Dukhobor who could speak some English tried to comfort me by telling me how that day he had frozen "the heel of his nose."

The "Boss" of the mill brought us two cups and a kettle of hot water for tea. It is only recently that china-ware has been used by these refugees from the land of the Tsar.

The Padre put the food on the table, for I was dazed and stupid. I ate it reclining in true Oriental fashion. There were no chairs, and the table, which was fixed, was situated next one of the bunks.

This was the sleeping camp, and it is never used for eating except by our own men.

The mill was not cutting then, owing to the extreme cold. The men were there loading their sleighs with lumber for the churches which were being erected in each village.



The Boss of
the Mill.

Janey Canuck

I made my bed on the big bench, which was eight feet wide and about fifty feet long. The men slept at the far end. The Padre was complaining that we had no wash-basin, and before he "turned in" told me we were like a German couple he heard about. They were giving evidence in a trial, and the man was asked by the lawyer :

"How old are you?"

"I am dirty."

"And what is your wife?"

"My wife is dirty-two."

"Then, sir, you are a very nasty couple, and I wish to have nothing further to say to either of you."

Shortly after I lay down, the Boss awoke me to say he had a bed made for us in his house, but I declined with thanks. Why should I bestir myself? A warrior taking her rest with her fur coat wrapped around her! Soft rugs, softer cushions, a leaping fire! How nice it was to be warm and sleepy.

It was four o'clock when I awoke. The men were talking. They talk always; that is unless they are putting wood on the fire, and, generally, they do both together.

I slipped on my moccasins, mittens, and cap, and stole out into the night.

Rabbits and prairie chickens were gambling about the yard in a risky, frisky

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fashion. The Dukhobors do not take life, and so these furtive wood-folk have become domesticated.

I saw a light in a building. It was a building about a hundred feet long, and was quaintly ornamented like the others. I was curious. I peeped in. It was the stable. I opened the door, and slipped in. A lantern was suspended in the middle of it. How warm and clean it was! The carefully groomed hides of the horses shone like satin in the half-light. They are big, solid, careful-looking animals. The Dukhobors have the best horses in the country, and take great care of them, sometimes killing them with kindness—another name for overfeeding. In the villages it is the custom to keep a fire in the stable where all the horses are stalled, and they are fed at night as well as day.

Outside, the spruce trees stood up tall and stiff, like sentinel grenadiers. The sky was bright with stars. Alone in this great vastness, in this "circumambient nothingness and night," one begins to doubt—even so frivolous a one as I—whether, after all, you are a little lower than the angels. You are possessed with a yearning to be nobler than you hold yourself to be. It is given you to hear "the still, small voice." Life, with its hurry and fever dreams, falls away, and you feel it is not possible the world can harm you.

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I did not wake again till after eight o'clock. It was a man turning a grindstone that awoke me. He said something in Russian. "Good morning," I suppose; "have you slept well?" But there was no thread of language relation between us. We were both human, that was all, and so we both smiled.

After breakfast, the Boss, who spoke a little English, took me to see the sights—the cook's camp, with its huge, clay oven and brick stove, the eating camp, the engine room, the blacksmith's shop, and his own quarters. I was sorry I had not accepted his offer of a bed. He had prepared one for us in a tiny room with a tiny stove and *such* furniture. The cupboard was of curious design and painted in vivid red and blue. The legs of the bench, too, combined art with utility, and there was a Russian chair which I coveted. Canadian manufacturers might aptly copy it.

"After all," said Richard Le Gallienne, "if one has anything to say, one might as well put it in a chair."

I was much interested in the bath-house. Every village has one. It has two apartments. In the first is a huge copper to heat the water. It is similar to the English household coppers, only larger. The second room contains a heap of stones under which is an aperture for fire. When these stones are heated, hot water is thrown on them,

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and the result is a cloud of steam that will wash away everything but original sin, and I am not so sure about even this. Tiers of benches are built up the walls, giving the apartment somewhat the appearance of a hospital theatre. The walls are mud-plastered. The plaster is laid on laths, which are arranged in diamond shape instead of horizontally.

I have heard people talk about "the dirty Dukhobors," but it is only the large cities in Canada that have public baths. Of course it has been argued that, as we all sprung from clay-mould, dirt, mud, garden-soil, or a compost of the same sort, it is the base impudence of pride to try to rub or scrub away the original clod. The most natural man is the dirtiest man, and there is really some holiness in what is illogically called filth. Besides, St. Jerome, one of the Fathers of the Church, said, "I entirely forbid a young lady to bathe."

In old times, saints used to soothe their bodies by prayer and fasting. The Dukhobor method is by prayer and bathing.

In the summer, I am told, both sexes bathe out of doors, just as they came into the world. This is not because of wickedness, but by reason of their morality and simplicity. After all, it is doubtless true that morality is a matter of geography, of religion, of circumstances.

Janey Canuck

The Padre took me to see his hay, which is here awaiting transportation to the limit. The Dukhobors have the contract of hauling it in. They are steady workers, but very slow. It does not pay to hire them except by contract.

Some few of them, too, are given to small duplicities, just the same as Canadians. I must always watch Simon, or he will cut the stove wood too long. He has a way, also, of piling it so that three-quarters of a cord will measure a whole cord.

Then there is Nikolai. We frequently recover a rope, a decking-chain, or an axe from among his "belongings." And one day, at the beginning of the winter, I had two boys cleaning the stoves. I was going out, and paid them. The liquid had not yet dried, nevertheless they at once decamped without giving the stove a single rub.

Now, these are only exceptions, and do not prove that all these people are dishonest. On the contrary, we have found them, as a whole, scrupulously honest and trustworthy.

The merest midge of a boy helped me into my wraps preparatory for the final stage of our journey. The Padre thought he would say something very absurd, so he asked the boy if he were married. Judge of our amazement when he owned up to being a father. He did not look over four-

In Saskatchewan

teen, but he was seventeen, and had been married a year. His wife is sixteen. You see we did not know how very, very old he felt. I told him Canadian boys were too poor to marry early, but he said :

“Me live my fader.”

Man has been defined as a woman-caressing animal, and the definition is so absolutely correct that it is beyond controversy. This being the case, there is a deal to be said in favour of a system that permits early marriages without the fear of poverty. Immorality is wholly unknown among this people.

The marriage service, as this youth explained it to me, is not complicated, being wholly without the benefit of bell, book, or candle. The couple simply make a declaration before their elders, respective families, and often the assembled village. These marriages are duly recorded in the registrar's office, although friction arose over this matter shortly after the colony was made.

I do not know if the marriages are based on love as defined by the “Encyclopædia Britannica”—“the principle of sympathetic and pleasurable attraction in thinking and feeling beings.” But, after all, it does not make much difference. Selection has not so much to do with happiness in marriage, as the recognition of the necessity for adaptation.



Janey Canuck

The Dukhobor woman is a housewife. She does not believe that her home is a jail, and that her babies are the turnkeys. Like Solomon's "virtuous woman," she "seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands."

On the other hand, she is a housewife only. She is not expected, as our women are, to be a combination of Mary, Martha, Magdalen, Bridget, and the Queen of Sheba.

XI

POLAR PENCILLINGS

“Do you know the blackened timber—do you know
that racing stream
With the raw right-angled log-jam at the end?”
—KIPLING.



THE Padre wrapped me up snugly for the journey. I was the first woman—white, black, or red—to traverse this part of Canada, and he was anxious that I should establish a good precedent.

Our road, for the first mile or so, ran through the Dukhobor timber. The dark spruces looked especially funereal with their streamers of *Tillandsia*, better known as “hanging moss.” The scene was only brightened by the silver-barked, lichen-blotched poplars.

Lying mummied in my blankets, I looked up into the twisty twigs of the filigree under which we were passing, “bare, ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang.” At long intervals I espied a nest in some gaunt tree. It only added to the loneliness of our way for:

Janey Canuck

“ There is no sadness in the world,
No other like it here or there—
The sadness of deserted homes
In nests or hearts or anywhere.”

After two hours' travel, we found ourselves surrounded by a ghostly and ghastly company of burnt trees. We hear much mawkish sentiment in these days about the felling of trees, but when one passes through such a territory as this, it seems as though the shame lay in leaving the trees so long unused. All this by-product might have gone to support, if not enrich, thousands of needy homes. Here is a land that has lain idle and unproductive since the world has known it, and bids fair so to continue to the end of time.

I wore three pairs of stockings and moccasins of moose hide that were lashed on with leather thongs ; yet my feet were cold—freezing. Cold feet will spoil any amount of ideal enjoyment. The Padre tried to light the lantern that I might use it as a foot-warmer, but the oil had frozen, and the wick refused to ignite.

He was relentless. I had to get out, then and there, and walk. With all my clothes I was as helpless as a mediæval knight in armour. It is hard to walk in the woods. The steps are so uneven, and the sharp, freshly-cut roots hurt one's feet cruelly. The horses walked more quickly than I did. I was getting wrathier every

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minute—because the Padre wouldn't wait—and consequently warmer. Madame de Staël was right : travelling is one of the sad pleasures of life.

We didn't speak for quite an hour after that. I decided to be hateful all the way. I could have bit his head off, but I suddenly forgot all about it with the sheer joy of seeing one of my own blue streamers fluttering on a moose-willow.

It was this way :—This road, which can only be traversed in winter, is but three months old. The line for it was struck by one Andrew, an Indian. He and a party of "breeds" cut the road out of what has hitherto been a howling wilderness of burnt timber, scrub, and muskegs. A gang of Dukhobors followed and cleaned up the work. Once more Andrew passed over it to blaze the trees and to tie streamers in muskegs where the first fall of snow would surely obliterate parts of the trail.

Andrew is the most intelligent Indian in all this country. He has risen above the blanket caste. He helped me to prepare these streamers. He said they should be all red, but I resisted, and had them of red, white, and blue.

Andrew says he never gets lost in the woods. He always selects a high object far ahead in the direction he wishes to go, and travels



Janey Canuck

towards it. The lack of this precaution is why men who are lost in the forest travel in a circle.

Nothing could be more appalling than these muskegs. They are cursed with a curse. Early in the season, before they were frozen hard, the teams would shake the earth for twenty-five feet around. In the summer they would swallow a form almost as light as a bird's. There are miles and miles of them—"aching leagues of solitude," with madness in the heart of them. Once get fifty yards off the trail, and the chances are you are lost for ever. The scene is a picture of desolation without sublimity and barrenness without relief. No need to spy out the nakedness of the land; it is thrust upon you at every turn. It is a land bitter, raw, and utterly worthless. A hundred miles of it is not worth an old glove. It is under the Isaian malediction: "I shall lay it waste, and it shall not be pruned or digged."

It is not until you go to the unfenced territories that you realise the place of the fence in the eastern provinces. The territories are beautiful in spots, but, as the story-book reviewers are wont to say, the interest is not sustained throughout.

Our clergyman tells me that his uncle was literally absorbed by one of these muskegs. Months afterwards, the dead man's brother found his gun in the place

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where he had sunk. He stuck the barrel of the rifle into the bog and left it standing there—a grim monument to one who had been an intrepid pathfinder.

The musk-rats fairly swarm in these muskegs. This is why they survive. They live where man would die. We passed several colonies of them. They look like small beavers, except that their tails are flattened from side to side. The female produces three or four litters of seven or eight every year.

An ermine crossed our trail, too. It covered the ground in a series of short, quick leaps, leaving claw tracks like a bird's. The ermine, or stoat, is a blood-thirsty little villain. He eats musk-rats, rabbits, and partridges. The trappers, it is reported, catch him by putting a smear of grease on a piece of iron. He puts his tongue to it, and, lo! the frosted iron holds him fast—not the first of creatures to be taken by the unruly member.

There is a story some preachers tell illustrative of purity. They say that if mud be placed around the ermine's nest he will die rather than soil his coat by crossing it, and so is trapped. I used to think this quite a pretty story, but since I have seen the ermine's habitat I know how utterly impossible it is. Supposing you *could* get clay and water here, it would freeze solid before you could spread it out.

Janey Canuck

The Padre keeps a paper of pin-facts to prick my bubbles of illusions, and he replied :

“ Women are so illogical. Summer does come once a year. Doesn't it ? ”

I confess to being wholly confounded till I remember that the ermine's coat turns grey in the summer, and he is never trapped then.

Now I make it a daily—indeed, an hourly—habit to treat the Padre as if he were in the right, and so I did not say anything. He would not change his opinion anyway, and I score heavily every time by giving him either his due or a compliment. A man likes to be head and shoulders in advance of his wife. He likes her to wonder at his amazing cleverness, and to brighten his spare hours with a little comfortable adulation.

We crossed several high, narrow ridges. They reminded me of the earthworks at Fort George, Niagara-on-the-Lake, which were thrown up in the war of 1812. The Padre told me we were crossing beaver dams and meadows, and that these wonderful rodents fairly swarmed here. The Indians consider the flesh of the beaver a great delicacy. In Germany, too, where beavers are very rare, it is esteemed highly, and the tail is always sent to the Emperor's table. While the Indians delight in the beaver's flesh they have a poor idea of its brains.

Polar Pencillings

“Beaver big fool,” they say. “Work all time same as white man.”

In every direction we saw the cleft hoof-prints of moose. In some places several had passed over the snow. I should judge there are many hundreds of them in this north country.

Towards evening we came into heavier timber again, chiefly poplar, with here and there a jack-pine. Our trail seemed to “fairly dawdle.” We are in “the desert and illimitable air ; lone, wandering, but not lost.”

It is easy at night to people the forest with weird beings—buskined nymphs, nixes, dwarfs, demons, dryads, fawns, witches, ghosts, and even Pan and all his merry rout. Indeed, you see moving, shadowy forms wherever you look. The dark languor of the wood and the soft depths of gloom have an air of mystery. The trees seem to reach out their arms for you to come and be at rest. Perhaps it is the delirious glamour of your own mood, for some say we see nature through temperament.

In the Black Forest there were, and, perhaps, still are, little wood-wives or moss-folk. Keightley tells of them in his “Fairy Mythology.” He says they are “of the stature of three-year-old children, but grey and old-looking, and covered with moss. The women are of more

Janey Canuck

amiable temper than the men, who live further back in the woods."

These are the kindly fairies who help people with their haymaking, churning, and cooking, and when you do them a favour they give you a ball of yarn that is never ended, or chips that turn to yellow gold. The cruel Wild Huntsman kills these little wood-women, but if the good wood-cutter make three crosses on his stump, they sit in the midst of these and are safe from their wicked enemy.

It is not strange that the northern imagination invested the forests with awe as the haunts of Odin and Thor, and that the Teutons should make them the home of the Erl King and his elfin court. But groves in every land were the first temples. "The word *templum*," writes Grimm, "also means wood." This is, perhaps, why "Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God."

All day we had heard at intervals the yelps of brawling timber-wolves, but at night the packs were in full cry. I think they were baying the moon, as do their cultured relatives the dogs.

Thoreau says the moon is where dogs go when they die, and when they "bay the moon," they are calling to the White Pack that they are coming soon.

Once, as a child, I heard an old pioneer

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tell about the wolf-demons and how they cried at night around his house, and I shivered with terror. It seemed an experience so dreadful as to be almost unthinkable. Now, in the reality, I was not in the least uneasy. Perhaps it was because an awful weariness had settled down on me. I had spent nine hours in the open sleigh with the temperature 50° below zero. The tension of the air had made a large draught on my vitality, and I felt I must sleep.

“This is our log-road, and these are all your own trees—miles of them. Look up, sweetheart!”

I opened the corner of one eye long enough to see we had entered a forest of towering, spear-headed spruces, but although I have come half across the continent to view these very trees, I cannot bear to look at them.

Why does the Padre shake me like that? He is hateful. And now my teeth are chattering like—I am too sleepy to think of the word, but it is the name of something the corner-man clatters in the minstrel show.

I try to drink some brandy-wine the Padre gives me, but my lips freeze on the metal of the flask.

“Castanets!” Yes, that is the word I want!

Only a few twists more in the road till

Janey Canuck

I hear voices, and, quicker than I can tell it, two lumber-jacks have me out of the sleigh and into a wide, low cabin that is bright and warm, where there is an odour of fresh, wheaten bread, and where a man moves among pots and pans with the air of one conducting a religious ceremony.

XII

IN CAMP

"The God of Fair Beginnings
Hath prospered here my hand."

—KIPLING.



I SLEPT the sleep of the well-fed and woke up twice as good as new. The sunlight poured in through a sash of window-panes that ran across one side of the room. There were rows of shelves with granite-ware, jam pots, pickle pails, and mysterious jars. There were strings of red-skinned onions, too. Hams and bacon hung pendent from the heavy rafters, and a line of dish towels and clean shirts behind the range suggested something of the modern cosy, or unc cosy, corner. Two long tables covered with white oilcloth were at the far end of the room. The staunch furniture was so eminently useful, and at the same time so execrably ugly, that it could not have failed to delight the Roycrofters. The logs of which the house was built were chinked with moss, so that I had

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been actually sleeping in a moss-lined nest.

Next to a marble mansion, there is nothing comparable to a log house. Think of the royal extravagance of it. The trees in this cooking camp would supply inch boards, scantlings and laths for several town houses. The "desirable city residence" is thin—dreadfully thin—and accordingly susceptible to heat and cold. It is stiff, angular, ugly within and uglier without, but this nest of logs in the northern wilds has a motherly suggestion about it that is irresistible. Nature may bring all her big guns to bear upon it, but without avail. To the earlier and later rains it is impervious. To the frost and wind it says, "Thus far." To the lightnings, "Do your worst; what care I for a surface scald, or a mere splinter here and there?"

Albert laughed mightily when I inquired if it were breakfast time yet.

"Lor', ma'am, the men had breakfast four hours ago, and they ate right at that table. And to think you didn't hear them!"

Albert is the cook. He gave me his bunk last night and betook himself to the sleeping camp, which bears also the opprobrious name of "the doggery."

I sat up. The cookee, a chipper little Dane with a walk between a run and a stumble, brought me a big bowl of steaming

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broth, and bread. I began to think of Silverlocks in the woods, the big bears, and the soup. I pinched myself like the old woman in the nursery rhyme, and said, "This is surely none of I."

The soup was highly seasoned. It was sweet, satisfying, and sustaining. The Cap of Fortune could grant no more.

Outside the air was full of sunshine, but it was the kind of sunshine that hurt your eyes without in the least warming you.

The Padre was nowhere to be found. I got my saddle out of the sleigh and proceeded to adjust it to a bronco that belonged to the foreman. She had a calico-coloured hide, and a bad, red eye. Her ribs were flat, her hips cat-hammed, and her tail looked like a used up shaving-brush. Her nose, too, was sufficiently pronounced to declare the most stubborn propensities.

I have heard the back of a bronco spoken of in the West as "the hurricane deck of a cayuse." The expression is inspired. It cannot be improved upon.

It is said that a horse, at its best, is an amiable idiot; at its worst, a dangerous maniac. The bronco combines these traits at once. It makes no difference that it has reached the years of discretion, for the discretion never arrives with the years. Indeed, the word "bronco" is Spanish for "wild."

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I did not know this particular "bronc," and while tightening the girths was all the while remembering a proverb which says, "He that would venture nothing must not get on horseback."

Proverbs are unsatisfactory. If you accept any particular one as a guide, it will not fit all circumstances. It is best to adjust the proverb to the circumstance. That is why I swung off to the one which says, "Nothing venture, nothing win."

Perhaps Miss Bronco did not like the way I rode. The foreman rides along like the armour-clad knights of old—that is, with legs straight down like tongs in the fender.

She curved her back up in the middle like a one-humped camel, plunged down behind and reared in front, at the same time keeping her legs as stiff as stilts. She appeared to be three parts rubber and the rest iron. I was not exactly prepared for this impromptu rough-riding, or what the Padre would probably describe as my "pyrotechnic repertory of feats," and so my hair fell down my back and in my face, thus adding vastly to my confusion.

I tried to hold my aplomb between forces centripetal and centrifugal, but——

When my own horse "bucks" I hit him hard between the ears with the butt of my whip. It has the settling effect of a nursery "spank." I tried it on this flying

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bunch of sinews, and before I knew what had happened I had once more illustrated the laws of gravitation and dynamics. Fortunately, we had backed into comparatively soft snow, and I was only hurt enough to be indignant.

Yes, I would do it ; else where is the use of belonging to the pick of the Scots who fought their way to Canada by the north of Ireland ? Besides, I was a thousand miles from a Red Cross Society, or a Society for the Prevention, etc., etc., “ and there’s never a law of man or God runs north of 53°.” I would do it deliberately and thoroughly. I would endeavour to teach her ladyship that my principal object in mounting was to stay there at my convenience.

I took time to regather my hairpins and re-arrange my hair. I secured a stout rope halter, and tied her Roman nose close to a tree. I procured a long whip with a rawhide lash, and had only cut her once or twice when I found myself whipping her, “ whaling ” her, “ basting ” her, with all the fury of a woman scorned. I lathered her with all my might, and she kicked with all her main.

The cookee ran out and stood wringing his hands in an ecstasy of woe.

“ She keel you,” he wailed. “ I know she weel. The Padre, he keel me. He keel me dade.”

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How the itch to fight lies close under the skin of every woman with Irish blood ! I wanted to turn on the cookee too, but wisely confined myself to mine enemy. I whipped her again and again with all the vindictive menace of my soul, and until I was entirely satisfied that the punishment fitted the crime.

Then the cookee helped me into the saddle and unloosed her halter, but that lump of Western wickedness refused to budge herself one inch. The blacksmith had come out of his camp, and he led her off by the head till she started of her own accord.

It was an ignominious defeat, but she did not, however, try to unseat me again. As matters stand, I am afraid of that mare, but I have doubts as to the feeling being reciprocated. I also have emphatic orders to desist from further attempts to ride her. "She is not broken to skirts," I am informed. Her name is "Dinah"—short for dynamite, I suppose.

There is a marvellous stillness in a spruce forest. There is no rustling in the branches. No breath of wind is muttered or unexpressed through the close-matted jungle of big trees and little trees. The needles on the conifers all point upwards. If they leaned out of the perpendicular they would not be able to resist the weight of snow which lies in broad masses like

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white quartz on the branches, bending them in exquisite curves.

This aerial electricity must have wonderful curative properties for certain disorders, and I wonder that physicians do not more often advise for nerve-shaken, over-civilised people a sojourn in these regions. Here, too, you may weave a bit of poetry into the warp of your days. All the way one's heart is singing, "Dark, and true and tender is the north."

It is a great pleasure to a city woman when she is able to discern the survey lines, and to tell by the Roman numerals from the iron post in the surveyor's mound what township, section, and range she is in. It gives her a sense of superiority over other women, and of satisfaction with herself. She may have trouble mounting her bronco again, but, likely as not, a teamster will be going campward at that very moment and will see her once more safely on the "hurricane deck."

The teamsters are called "skinners." I met them all on the log road. Some I know and some are strangers, but all are polite to "the Missus."

They are proud of their teams, and like to be questioned about them. I ask Frank Wark about his big greys, and he tells me they are "game as pebbles and gritty as bulldogs." William York thinks his team can "bet" (Western for past-participle of

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“beat”) any two teams on the haul, and Tibble’s are “clean grit all through.” Every man has a similar song, except one who complained that the loader was “no tarnal use” and was killing the horses with big loads.

The log road was made after winter had set in, and already the snow had fallen on the thick, soft needle mound. This made the hauling heavy. It all had to be cleaned off to the ground, and fresh snow piled on to secure a hard road-bed.

The choppers, sawyers, skidders, and swampers had lit a fire and were having their midday lunch. They invited me to join. True, they had no dietetical elegancies—only fried pork, bread, butter, tea, and syrup, but my appetite was keen enough to be generously uncritical. I imbibed unknown quantities of tea. The men called the sugar and milk “the trimmings.” The condensed milk, considered separately, is correctly known as “tin cow.” The food was good, and I ate and ate and was glad that nature had endowed me with so marvellous an appetite and such a well-balanced capability of digestion.

I get transcendent delight from eating. There are some very excellent people who stigmatise the delights we get from the senses as unseemly and vulgar. This is a mistake which even the Romans made. They portrayed the beautiful goddess

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Voluptas as having Virtue under her feet. There is no reason why the intellect should be unduly deified by "keeping the body under"—no reason why the stomach and all its works should be denounced as "a diabolic machine." It is true that Daniel thrived on pulse and looked fairer than those who ate the king's meat, but I have a poor opinion of such gastronomical idiosyncrasies. And, when you come to think of it, Jacob's mess of pottage is the most expensive dish on record.

An inquisitive, cheeky little bird walked among us and picked up the crumbs, arguing like a politician. He was a hail-fellow-well-met. His colour was a dirty grey, and he had a black head. This was the Whisky Jack of which I had heard so much. He is a cross between the shrikes and jays. He has several names, such as Hudson's Bay bird, Oregon jay, and moose bird. He gets the latter because he is an alarmist and warns the moose when the hunters approach.

The Indians call him *whiskachan*, or *wis-kat-jan*. Our name is supposed to be a corruption of this, but it seems to me the Indians have corrupted our word. His scientific name is *Perisoreus Canadensis*, which, loosely translated, means "the Canadian bird which chases around the wine-cup." This is probably why he is called "Whisky Jack." It is an unfair

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name, and it would be more in keeping with the character of both parties if he traded with the lumber-jacks.

A fire gives to the forest a sense of at-hometiveness. And wood is a-plenty. The men say we may have all we want for the mere "axing" of it. There is no way you can waste time more pleasantly than by poking the big logs and watching the fire-effects. Dead trees are said to love the fire. Sitting alone, when the men have gone away, it is not difficult to comprehend the ideals and habits of the fire-worshippers and Vestal Virgins. One falls into futile, but none the less pleasant, musings about the flame that kept the way of the tree of life ; the tongues of fire that came down on the Day of Pentecost ; the burning bush ; the flame that fell on the altar at Carmel, and the fiery pillar that gleamed on Israel's track.

I am told the Indians make different camp fires from the whites. The latter set the fire so that the logs burn in the middle first, but the Indians place the flames to the ends of the logs. The Indians say the white man makes a fire so hot he cannot get near it to warm himself.

I follow the sound of chopping and soon come to the "bunch" of timber where the men are working. The foreman blazes the trees they are to cut, and then the men, in pairs, chop them. When the tree falls,

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the swampers lop off its branches and the sawyers divide it into logs. There are from two to five logs in a tree.

A rivalry has sprung up among the gangs, so that the beat o' axe is incessant. So far this season, each pair of men has averaged seventy logs a day. This is considered good cutting, as the trees are large.

I measured myself against one log. It was almost as thick through as I am tall. Of course, I am not a giantess, but still, this was a pretty good stick. It measured twelve feet in length and scaled 552 feet of lumber. This was above the average. Usually the scale is about eight logs to the thousand feet.

As I watched these men at work I was struck by their well-developed physiques, their flexibility of limb and undeniable grace of movement. The attack movement throws the weight of the figure on the hips, and half of the body moves alternately with each stroke, with a turn of the shoulders to correspond.

In these days of patent "exercisers," elaborate systems of physical culture and of scientifically equipped gymnasia, it might not come amiss if some specialist in the art turned his attentions to the benefits that might be derived from following the craft of woodman. I know several æsthetic feeblings of the pictorial stamp who would

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be developed and loosened out by a season's work in the spruce. They would get swarthy, weary, perhaps ragged. The palms of their hands would thicken and their cheeks would resemble the tan of the tree bark, but they would get muscles of iron in frameworks of steel, and they would walk like men. And it is not a menial work either. The Psalmist tells us that, in his time, a man was famous "according as he lifted up axes upon the thick trees."

Nikolai can drop a big spruce as deftly as a fly is cast. It falls just in the spot he says it will. I tried him twice.

As he sinks his blade through its bronzed cuirass and hits into its heart, he seems almost vindictive. I have no doubt he makes believe the tree is the Tsar, or a captain of Cossacks.

Further on the skidders were at work. They roll the logs up a spiked incline by means of canthooks. It looks dangerous work, and I suppose it is, but most of the men are strong, supple, and active as cats. One of them, in particular, was such a quick, handy-looking chap that, had he been a boxer, I would have backed him for all I was worth—or could borrow—to beat anything his weight.

Tutti and Frutti, the ox team, are skidding with the horses. A Galician named Olaf is driving. This is his first

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experience. He tells me he had to take them because "dem oxes got sassy and mostly killed Scotty." Olaf is doing well. He keeps the oxen moving, never stopping them for a second, which is one of the first essentials of their management.

The sleighs used in the woods are very heavy and have three-inch runners. The logs are piled up on them like loads of hay. Such loads are never, by any chance, seen in the lower provinces.

The men at "the dump" were piling the logs on huge skidways thirty feet high. Each log is stamped with a rough hall-mark before it is unloaded. In the spring, when the ice breaks up, these logs will be rolled into the river to start on their troublesome career southward. I was more impressed by these skidways than anything I had seen since I came up. They are hurtling and portentous, and weigh on you with a crushing sense of domination. They represent so vast an amount of work, money, and—yes—anxiety and pain, to say nothing of the conserved energies of nature that for centuries have been stored in them.

In the twilight the scene becomes dim, and objects stand back in uncertain silhouette. It is a goblin country. There is a strange fusion of earth and sky. The river, trees, and snow seem to stretch in long, straight lines across the world.

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The glory of the aurora is unapproachable by language. These "merry dancers" of the nor'land turn earth into heaven before our very eyes. The whole dome of the sky is a huge garnet, quivering in celestial fire. All is a wild welter of palpitating light—an opalescent fantasia of amber, crimson, and violet. Its transcendent beauty is, at once, the artist's inspiration and despair.

Far away, to-night, in the land of clocks and chimes, they are wearied because of the play, and frown by reason of song. Here, in the lonely sub-arctics, our whole beings so thrill with the heavenly vision that we well-nigh sink beneath its awesome grandeur. We are glad and sorrowful, as if we had come too near to God. We are heart to heart with the Infinite—"exiled from earth and yet not winged for heaven."

XIII

"ALL UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE"



AN Indian came into the limits to-day with a pony laden with pelts. He was a "woods Indian," and wore his hair long and tied with a band. His coat was of tanned moose hide, fringed around the edges, and wore he a parti-coloured sash. This was Maganinais, the mightiest hunter in all these parts. Last season he killed thirty moose and four bears. He says the bears are getting scarce. He has been trapping since the first snowfall, and has brought me the mink skins I ordered for a coat. Henri, a "breed" belonging to the camp, acted as interpreter.

Maganinais' face is exactly like that of the tobacco Indian in Yonge Street, Toronto. It reminded me of something I once read of a mummy—it cannot smile, nod, or wink, but it can look superior.

The mink skins are dark, well covered, and silky. Henri wants to tan them for me, but I have been warned by fur buyers

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that the Indian work is greatly inferior to the furrier's, although the contrary opinion is generally held.

Canada produces nearly half a million mink skins for the annual sale of the Hudson Bay Company, in March, in London. The merchants attend this sale, and through them the skins are distributed in Europe. The skins have recently become more valuable, partly because they are not so plentiful as formerly, and partly by reason of their present vogue in the smart world. An attempt has been made to establish minkeries, but it was proved that the pelt of the tame mink had so deteriorated as to become almost as soft as a mole's.

I laid violent hands on the van and the cook's supplies, for trading purposes.

For his pay, Maganinais selected tea, sugar, tobacco, rice, beans, a jack-knife, a pair of blankets, ammunition, a rope, matches, pain-killer, a red handkerchief, a pocket mirror, a frying-pan, some flour, dried apples, and a pipe.

I was dubious as to his ability to carry away all this stuff, till I saw him pack it. With the bundle on his back, the pony looked like an enormous one-humped camel. Then the Indian threw a rope about it, and twisted and looped the rope with manipulations like those of a professional thaumaturgist. When he had



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finished tightening in, there was almost no bundle. It was emphatically *multum in parvo*. He dexterously finished off with what Henri told me was a "good, tight, diamond hitch."

The proper way of packing an Indian pony is said to be a feat only accomplished after years of practice. The same probably applies to all pack animals, for Rudyard Kipling makes a commissariat camel to sing thus :

"Can't ! Don't ! Shan't ! Won't !
Pass it along the line ;
Somebody's pack has slid from his back,
Wish it were only mine.
Somebody's load has tipped off on the road,
Cheer for a halt and a row,
Urr ! Yarrh ! Grrh ! Arrh !
Somebody's catching it now."

One hardly knows whether to take an Indian as a problem, a nuisance, or a possibility. He may be considered from a picturesque, philanthropic, or pestiferous standpoint, according to your tastes or opportunities. You may idealise him, or realise him. As a general thing, he seems to be ranked as the *nux vomica* of Canada. Oliver Wendell Holmes calls the Indians one of the provisional races, "red crayon sketches of humanity, laid on the canvas before the colours for the real humanity are ready." Their lives are stigmatised as "poor, nasty, brutish, short."

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Some few hold a diverse opinion. They believe that while the Indian has a red skin, he is, to use the expressive Western term, "white right through."

It is a mistake to either vilify or deify him. The truth probably lies between the extremes.

There are three characteristics in which he is generally conceded to be superior to the paleface—his ability to slur silently over difficult or dangerous ground; his genius for trailing or tracking, and his "homing" instinct.

Regarding his future, we may give ourselves little uneasiness. This question is solving itself. A few years hence there will be no Indians. They will exist for posterity only in waxwork figures and in a few scant pages of history. However brave and game they may be, there is nothing for them in the end but death. They have to reckon with invincibility.

The Indians hereabout are Crees and Chippewas, with a few Tuscaroras. Henri, who interpreted to-day, is the son of a French Canadian trapper and a Sioux squaw. He has inherited the worst traits of both races. It must be remembered, though, that he has never seen the better ones. Sometimes I think he is brother to the coyote.

His family live in a tent near our home. They exist on the offal from the village

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abattoir. All is fish that comes to their net, and most things come sooner or later. I brought Henri an owl one day, telling him I wanted the claws and the skin of the head. He ate the rest of the bird, thus conclusively proving that the term, "a boiled owl," is no empty, fanciful expression.

When we need Henri to act as a guide he is invariably drunk, but sobers quickly if given a meal of sour pickles.

He does not like to be bored with energy. He holds wonderfully optimistic views of the possibilities of next week. There will be golden opportunities, smooth sailing, open doors, horseshoes, rainbows, roses, silver spoons, and four-leaved clover—next week. Next week is the week of jubilee. This being the case, it is quite obvious that he should take life easily. Why should he comply with the white man's unjust and hateful paradox—to kill oneself to live? Why should he trouble about his children either? Destiny will look after them. He recently gave his consent to let them go to an Indian boarding-school. It was so quickly and generously given that my suspicions were aroused. I had the children medically examined, and



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found their little bodies to be entirely scrofulous. He has buried five children already. Balzac, in "Le Père Goriot," refers to "dramas that go on and on." This is one of them.

The Indians hereabout sometimes come to the camp offering to sell moose meat. They are always refused. This is not because the men do not relish the meat, or because they have scruples about keeping the game laws holy, but for fear of the Indians "squealing." The Indians are allowed to kill game at any season, but may never sell it. On an evil day, one of them sold a quarter of venison to a lumber camp, and then reported to the game-warden. He got half the fine, but the bottom has fallen out of the trade.

Since coming into camp I have been much impressed by the clothing of the lumber-jack. It is a model of utility, being calculated to keep him warm without being burdensome. He fully believes in the meteorological maxim that waves of cold are waves of death. At the same time his clothing is not unpicturesque. In the early part of the season, when the snow is dry, he wears moose-hide moccasins—the shoes of silence. He keeps a pair of larigans for a change. They are brothers to the moccasin, and are made of oil-tanned cowhide, with flexible soles.

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In soft weather he dons a thick shoe of snag-proof rubber with a lining of red eiderdown. This is not used in the winter because of the tendency of rubber to draw the frost. The cook and cookee wear dolges, a style of shoe almost universally worn in these sub-arctics. The dolge is made of an excellent quality of soft felt, with a woollen fleece lining. They are easy to walk in, and are free from the jar that accompanies leather foot-gear.

The lumberman's stocking is known as the "Lombard sock." It comes up to his knees, and is held by a gay cord running through and round it. The stockings may be of any colour or combination of colours, but are usually in good taste. To ensure warmth he generally wears underneath these a thick pair of home-knit socks of ordinary length.

He wears knickerbockers of brown corduroy, or trousers of mackinaw, that wonderful material which bids defiance to rain, snow or cold. His under-shirt is of wool and his shirt of blue or grey cotton, fleece-lined. (I happen to know these private particulars because I ordered the things in Winnipeg myself). Over these, he dons a sweater, or a waistcoat, and tops all with a sheep-lined jacket of tan duck, known commercially as the Hudson Bay coat. His cap is of blue felt, and has a flap behind which is fur-lined. This

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flap may be tucked inside as lining, when not required. He wears two pairs of mittens—one of wool and the other of unlined moose-hide. He does not object to paying a good, round price for his clothing, but it *must* be of the very best quality. He will not tolerate any deception on this score.

He will not tolerate poor food either. Indeed, you must go into a lumber camp to get something to eat. The "jacks" do not dine on half a pasteboard package of chips, all the force and vim of which have gone into the label. Go out into the supply camp and look at "the grub pile"—the great quarters of beef, naked and rosy. Turn over the jagged vertebræ of a Manitoban range-ox and wonder however it grew. Poke your fingers into sacks of rolled oats for "halesome parritch," rice, beans, and flour. Poke two fingers, three if you like, into the raisins, prunes, peaches and syrup, and then put them in your mouth. And there are barrels of sugar, tins of coffee, chests of tea, sacks of potatoes, crates of condensed milk, boxes of tinned tomatoes, tubs of butter, pails of lard, and "apples and spice and all things nice." They keep open house here, to the music of knives and forks.

But the book-keeper gave me to understand that the cook is such a marvel of ingenuity that he could cater if there

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wasn't a thing in camp. And the book-keeper told me a story, too. It may be an old one, but it was new to me. It was about a missionary who went up among the Eskimos. He could not eat blubber, so existed almost solely on canned food. After a few months, he got a gramophone and gave his parishioners a concert. No one spoke for about an hour, then one old man nudged another old man, and nodded his head in the direction of the gramophone, as if it had at last solved the mystery. What he said was: "Canned white man."

Being Saturday, the men had a dance to-night in the sleeping camp. It is stanchly built, but rude as a house built with a child's box of bricks. There was a smell of tobacco, spruce and—well, humanity. Through it, now and then, came a faint, piercing reek of iodoform. A lad from Ontario cut off two of his toes this morning. A "tote" team will take him out to the hospital to-morrow. Although he looked as if he would faint, he did not wince while his foot was being dressed. The camp etiquette requires that no one shall murmur. Cæsar must not cry out "as a sick girl," lest Cassius scorn and gibe. Besides, this youth had now won his spurs. Most lumbermen are as proud of the loss of a finger or toe as Christian in "The Pilgrim's Progress" was when he lost his burden.

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The music for the dance was supplied by a young Englishman. He played with an air, as if before the gallery. His performance reminded me of the story of the Italian who taught George III the violin, and who, on being asked by the king as to his progress, replied,

"Please your Majesty, there are three classes of players :

1. Those who cannot play at all.
2. Those who play badly.
3. Those who play well.

Your Majesty is just rising into the second class."

Still, to our free, easy, and democratic audience, his bow was a wand of divination. Had his listeners all been little children and he the Pied Piper, his command over them could not have been more absolute.

We did not stay long, for we were conscious that the men felt under some restraint, all except a fiery-headed little Dane who whirled around the room something after the manner of a decapitated hen. His movements were the effervescence of unalloyed animal delight. Besides, the room was hot with a dull, determined heat that seemed independent of the stove. There was a possibility, if we stayed longer, that we would melt away to our constituent elements.

XIV

PATHFINDERS

“ Ah ! lone the life they follow,
And rough the roads they ride,
The right men, the white men,
The men of Sunset Side.”



WE had service in the camp this morning. It opened with the singing of “Jerusalem the Golden.” The Padre led off and sang the hymn all in one key and that a wrong one, but it was a well-meant effort, and we all joined in with a will. The lesson was from Job xxviii. The Padre stopped reading after the sixth verse, and told us about the great pathfinders in these Canadian woods and what they accomplished — about Pierre Radisson, Groseillers, Mackenzie, Hudson, and Macdonald of Garth. The men were deeply interested, because this winter they have helped to cut out wilderness roads themselves.

Then the Padre read and commented on the seventh and eighth verses—“ There is a path which no fowl knoweth and which the vulture’s eye hath not seen ;

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the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it."

We had another hymn and then the sermon. It was not a sermon either—more of a talk about "the mother-heart of God." He compared the comfort of God to that of a mother. A mother has (1) a simple method of instruction. She has (2) a special capacity for attending to hurt hearts. (3) An almost unlimited patience for the erring. (4) A peculiar favouritism for the weaklings. (5) An unique way of putting her child to sleep.

The Padre has not preached for months. He is resting his throat. Perhaps this is why the subject took such a hold of him. Or perhaps it was because he had a vision of a far-away mother, and a soft sorrow crept across his heart. It is so easy to tear a paper along the line in which it is folded. Be that as it may, some way or other this little company of men seemed to move him strangely, and he, in turn, moved them to tears.

* * * * *

The sound of the forest? One cannot tell. To hear "the beatings of the hearts of trees" one must be alone—absolutely alone. It may be like the swish of silken skirts on a stairway; like the wash on far-off shingle; like the slur of stealthy footsteps. Sometimes the

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whisper rises and falls till most of all it is like the fragile accent of the grieving oboe. I think in his D minor Sonata, Schumann tried to hold the theme of the pines. But the theme must always be a lost chord, for—

“to portray the forest pines,
That were to undertake the human heart;
So does it of their murmurings seem a part.”

* * * * *

The conifers have educated, formal looks. They can be personified with ease. The Brahmins saw Pan in them. The Christian calls them “God’s crops.”

The pine were fitter emblem to represent Canada than the maple. The maple is indigenous only to the southern provinces, the pine to all. Its characteristics spell out endurance, constancy, health, longevity.

In Japan, the coquette sends her love a leaf or branch of maple to signify that, like it, his love has changed.

And how like us the trees are! They have lungs, blood, skin, and pores. They breathe oxygen all day, and exhale carbonic acid gas at night. But there is more of the latter than they can breathe



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out, and so it burns up and forms carbon for the growth of the trees. The trees become water-gorged and sweat, too. The heart-wood, where the cells are closed up, are the bones of the trees.

Théophile Trembly is an old ranger, and he tells me that when in the spring the tree's pumps are at work, the wood formed is generally lighter in colour, but in summer the tree needs less food and the wood is heavier, stronger, and darker.

The hollow tree is like humanity, too. It is one in which the sap-wood may live long after the heart-wood is dead. Secretly, and pagan-like, I have always had a great respect for a hollow tree. I should not be surprised if there were truth in the old jingle that says :

“ There are saints in there
That hear all people's prayers.”

Yes ! The trees resemble us. “ I wonder if they like it ? ” queries a poet—like being trees—

“ I suppose they do. . . .
I guess they like to stand still in the
sun,
And just breathe out and in, and feel
the cool sap run,
And like to feel the air run through
their hair
And slide down to the roots and
settle there.”

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Let the tree answer for itself.

“ I covet not to wander,
Who hold far lands in fee,
For where I stand unmoving
The broad world comes to me.”

Once, when George Herbert was troubled by the little use he was in the world, he wrote these lines :

“ I read and sigh and wish
I were a tree,
For then I should grow
To fruit or shade, at least.
Some bird would trust
Her household to me,
And I should be just.”

I asked Théophile if he believed in wood elves.

“ Wat you call fairee, Madame? *Oui!* *Oui!* *certainement*, but ah see dem nevaire. You see eet lak dis, Madame,” he explained. “ *Le Bon Dieu*, he veesit *notre bonne mère* in ze beautiful gardaine. Heem ax see de children. Wan, two, dree! Heem say to *garçons* w’at Eve she feex up fine. Den Heem ax for *garçons* w’at Eve have not feex up fine, and Eve she mak *une* curtsey and say, ‘Dees is all, M’sieur,’ and *Le Bon Dieu*, zen he say, ‘Dem w’at you hid from me, Ah shall always hide from men.’

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“Dees, Madame,” says Théophile, “ees what you call ze fairee.”

In the forest it is so easy to believe mythology, and easy to think that the lives of dryads and hamadryads—beautiful woman-forms—are linked with the trees, and when the axe rings a death-knell on them the dryads cry out in agony. This may be true after all, since so wise a man as Henry Drummond has said that “man (wo-man) impersonated, man crystallised, man vegetative, speaks to man unpersonated.” Why should we sneer at the Norse conception of Yggdrasill, the great ash tree whose boughs are through all the heavens and its roots through all the world, while we hold a belief in the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life?

All peoples have found the woods to be natural temples. As they pass under the spires and arches and by the pillars and through the aisles, they are ever wont to pray.

Astarte was worshipped by the tribes of Palestine in the groves, and the Jews were drawn away to them from the tabernacles of Jehovah. Ezekiel bewailed this and wrote :

“For when I had brought them into the land which I lifted up mine hand to give unto them, then they saw every high hill and every thick tree, and they offered

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there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering, there also they made their sweet savour, and they poured out there their drink offerings."

The Druids of Britain revered the oaks, and Tacitus, writing of the ancient Germans, says where worship was performed sacred vessels and altars stood in the forest and the heads of animals hung on the boughs of trees. In these places, too, were held the assize and folk-mote.

Ruskin has drawn attention to the fact that Milton filled his Paradise with flowers, but no flowers are mentioned in Genesis.

"The things," he says, "that are mentioned in the Garden of Delight are trees."

To Théophile, the snow tracks are the indexes of Nature's book. As we walk along he stops to read them. This dainty, dot-like, inconspicuous track belongs to the skunk, that "wee bit beastie a' strip't black and white wi' a tail like a soldier's cockade."

The rabbit's trail is as broad as my two hands. His hind legs act as snow-shoes and enable him to out-do his pursuers.

The fox leaves a trail of linear exactness. He walks as if he had two feet

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instead of four. Each print is directly in front of the preceding one.

* * * * *

This Sunday evening, as I write, half a dozen men have gathered into the cook's camp and lounge around the fire in the easy, half-languid manner of people who are resting after hours spent in outdoor exercises. And, because of the fire and the half twilight, they have opened their hearts. One man has told of the snakes near Fort Pelly. In all these parts, snakes are unknown except in this one spot, about half a mile square, on the Snake River. They are so thick here that the wheels of vehicles scrunch them in great numbers. An old well in this region is filled with a swirling mass of snakes, each "a running brook of horror." The Dukhobors have tried to exterminate them, and on one occasion some mounted police carried away a wagon-box full. I have no doubt the Indians have a legend of a mythical hag or devil in connection with this gruesome spot.

From snakes, the conversation drifted to an item one of the men read in the newspaper, regarding a woman who died recently in Finland. In her will she bequeathed her estate to Satan. All attempts to invalidate it have proved unsuccessful.

A big, stiff-tongued Scotsman from

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"ayont the Tweed" gave it as his opinion that if the devil had all the estates rightly his, he would possess most of the earth.

"Bedad!" ejaculated a big-mouthed Irishman. "She is the first woman Oi ever heard of that paid her boord afore-times."

In polite society women do most of the talking. This is not because men are stupid, but by reason of the fact that clothes and scandal may be mentioned in polite society, while money and stomachs are subjects tabooed.

Now a lumber-camp, according to the popular idea, is not "polite society," and so the trend of conversation is different. Strictly speaking, there is no conversation in the camp. What goes by the name is more properly discussion—friction. This applies also, in a considerable measure, to all Canadian society. The object of our talk is to convince rather than to exchange ideas, to interest, or to amuse.

The people in Europe are more polite. They never contradict you, no matter how many lies you tell. Alcott was right in saying that heaven was a place where you could have little conversation.

The favourite subject for friction is theology. In the West every mother's son is a theologian—that is, he is born with an objection in his mouth. No one ever seems to acknowledge that he is

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mistaken, thus showing that arguments do not prevail in anything that matters. To-night, the moot point is the miracles as recorded in the Gospels. The language of debate and arguments, if faithfully transcribed, would make interesting, if not startling, reading for a theological class. My opinion was asked, but I evaded giving it, primarily, because I do not wish to "take sides" and, secondarily, because I hold a miracle to be like the "general horse" of logicians — an airy abstraction about which discussion may be had, but on whose back no one can ever ride.

The Padre tells me that several of the men bear assumed names. In one case it is because the man holds to the ancient theory of wives in multiples, but to the modern practice of wives in series. And he is the ugliest man in camp. His face is like that of a gargoyle.

The proneness of femininity to fall in love with men that are plain is unaccountable. Woman's love has a way of "glorifying clown and satyr." We gaze on a piece of shag and think him a diamond of the first water. The greyer the gander the deeper the passion of the goose. It is a habit with which few men will quarrel.

Led here by necessity, by chance, or by the wilding wander lust, the lumbermen represent all countries and nearly

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all classes. Many of them are respectable homesteaders who are glad to earn a couple of hundred dollars in the winter months. The return from their few acres of cultivated soil is, at first, scant and sometimes unprofitable, and so ready cash is a rare commodity with most. Besides, many of these homesteaders are bachelors and enjoy the hearty, if rough, comradeship of the camps.

There are bad men among "the jacks," desperadoes of the deadliest breed—men who are mere pulps of animalism—but they are by no means so common as is generally supposed. They are not so wicked, either, as untutored and undeveloped. Indeed, like most other folk, they are a heterogeneous compound of virtue and vice, with a balance in favour of the former.

True, there is nothing of the milksop about them. Forest blood ever runs hotly. A man who wields an axe breathes deeply, and tingles with life in every vein. He drinks life from the pines and highly ozonized atmosphere. He has health and energy to throw away in a superabundance of vitality. The life is calculated to produce hardy, self-reliant, self-poised men. It is not until a man has endured the fine but stinging test of cold, hunger, and hardship that he knows the meaning of life.

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It is a bad day for a race, too, when it becomes over-civilised. Brutality is a sign of strength and health. When people become soft they become a prey. The nations which will live long in the land, and whose children will be cast in manly mould, are not those who have been polished till all the fibre is rubbed away. The elemental passions of hunger and love ought to rule in this new Western world—and, in truth, they do.

XV

HOMEWARD BOUND

"Cling to the peace of obscurity. They shall be happy that love thee."



WE left the camp to-day. I was homesick leaving. I hold those in high esteem who live under green trees. The life is large, fine, and sane. It clears the mind of many mists, and teaches one the fundamental facts of life.

There is a sense of isolation in the woods that you do not find to be loneliness. A large part of the pleasure, too, is to discover that you can not only live without the "modern conveniences" and amusements of the city, but that also you are really happier without them. It gives you a wondrous sense of satisfaction with yourself.

We stopped at the Dukhobor village of Traitzkor on our way home. The people there have not fully taken you to their hearts until you have drunk their tea. True, it is poor, watery stuff, but, on the other hand, it is hot and wet. It

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has the superlative advantage, too, of being brewed in a marvellous brass samovar which has been brought from Russia.

I am unable to ask for anything I need, but among people so gifted with the capacity to anticipate human desires, language is superfluous.

The women crowded about me examining my golf-skirt, lace tie, watch, and hair-pins. Then they all laughed heartily at something they were pleased to consider a huge joke.

Humour has been rightly called "the divine, saving grace." I like women who are humorous. They are never conceited or vain, and are nearly always cheerfully philosophic. But when you are the witless subject of their humour, the position is unenviable. They saw I was perturbed, and a woman who could speak a little English pointed to my auto cap and then said "moustache," at the same time twirling an imaginary appendix to her upper lip. Then they all laughed again. I was, they inferred, sufficiently mannish-looking to wear a moustache. Of a surety, that which you wear on your head strikes the note of your whole personality.

I pretended to be deeply offended, and so they stroked me down, both literally and metaphorically, saying "*Dobra! Dobra!*" (Good! Good!)

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I seized this opportunity of examining their heads and headgear. They have no hair to speak of. What little they possess is drawn tightly off the face and plaited behind in a pigtail. The custom of wearing kerchiefs has an injurious effect on their scalps. One woman has lately returned from our hospital at Poplar Bluff, where she was treated for a scalp disease. The nurses evidently insisted on her wearing a hat. It was deco-

rated with paper flowers of her own manufacture. She had utilised the blue paper of Seidlitz powders and white toilet paper. The effect was startling, and wholly unique.

Out of red and blue cabinets they brought me their needlework to examine. They are skilful at drawn-work, but an effective cloth is often spoiled by the coloured flowers they embroider upon it. The silks are always raw and badly blended. They are skilful knitters, but the yarn is closely twisted and harsh.



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I gave them some strongly flavoured cough-drops from my satchel, and soon the news spread among the youngsters, who gathered into the house in swarms. Towards the last the women were quartering the drops or giving little tastes out of their mouths.

I also gave them a bottle of eau-de-Cologne. They called it by name, pronouncing it "Köln," as the Germans do. Some few affected to dislike the odour, and drew wry faces. I was at a loss to understand this, but by a few words and many signs my friend who had twirled her moustache explained that perfume was bad form, and was only used by wayward girls to attract the boys.

Every house in the village has a swinging cradle, and in every cradle there is a baby. Philanthropists, preachers, and socialists who are working themselves into a fine frenzy over the decline of the birth-rate would find here their ideal.

Canadian women are the victims of wrong standards. Poets, comic writers, and novelists delight in laughing at large families. Five or six children are supposed to be an affliction. What wonder, then, that our women learn the lesson! Nor is art entirely free from the onus, for does it not hold up a wrong ideal of "the female form divine"? The painters of the Middle Ages handed down figures of women

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in whose bosoms ran warm, red blood. Even the Madonnas were, for the most part, women with robust bodies. They belonged distinctly to the order of mammalia. But now we have, as ideals, raw-boned, gaunt-muscled women of the Gibson creation—women with arms like mummies, and distorted bodies, incapable of children, and compared with which a china doll would be spiritual and artistic.


The Dukhobors will not permit you to call them Russians. They despise this title. The Russians are bad men who smoke, drink, swear, and kill each other.

Each Dukhobor village is building a church. They are also considering the advisability of connecting their villages by telephones and electric tramways.

XVI

WINTER NIGHTS

"A bold land, a cold land,
Where the wind is blowing free."
—R. W. GILBERT.

"HE winds of March do blow." Indeed, they do! All day we have had what Wordsworth calls "snow-muffled winds," that mourned around the house corners with an eerie sough. I like these best. I think they are south winds. They sob and cry for me, who perforce must smile.

Now and then I hear a wonderful undertone like a rich harp chord, or like the plunk of a covered string. It seems as if the great winds utilise the tall poplars and spruce trees as a many-manualled, needle-noted keyboard.

But to-night they have taken on an edge of steel. They are "felon winds"—"ill winds" that blow nobody good. I try to discern from which quarter they come. They have not the masterly fluster of western winds, but seem to be strung to a higher pitch. It was Maitland who

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said, of all the winds it is the west that loves best to play the fool.

But this wind is different. It must have been born in the screaming deserts of the niggard north, away in the bitter glooms that lie beyond the world. El Aishi, the Arabian author, wrote that the north wind blows with an intensity *equaling the cold of hell*. Dante's conception of the nethermost hell was one of the appalling frigidity of the north. Milton, too, enumerates cold as one of the tortures of hell in the lines "O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp."

This wind folds our little house in a close embrace, and then, as it draws away, fairly draws the house too. The forces of gravitation are reversed. There seems to be a weight in the wind; and in truth there is. Galileo discovered that air has gravity. Some say that the great Florentine astronomer's discovery was ante-dated thirty centuries, for in Job xxviii. 25 we find a weight assigned to the winds.

The theory of storm circuits, too, as set forth by Redfields, was clearly enumerated by the Wise Man in Ecclesiastes.

"The wind," he says, "goeth towards the south and turneth about unto the north. It whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to its circuits."

In other words, he means that the air

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is mapped in like manner to land and water, only the alterations are more variable.

But why trouble about the quarter from whence it comes? It is best to accept the centripetal theory, especially as the wind is a woman and bloweth where she listeth. Water has been bound, and fire tied down, but who has bought, measured, or held the wind?

It is good to draw close to the huge wood fires these nights. I am glad the children have experienced the joys of them. It is an experience unhappily becoming rare, even in Canada. We might almost say with Shelley, "Man scarcely knows how beautiful fire is."

Someone has computed that it takes the wood of five square miles every year to furnish matches for the world, the daily consumption in America making ten matches per head for every man, woman, and child.

When all the uses of wood and the waste of forest fires are considered, as well as the cost of cutting and cartage, we need not marvel that it is expensive and scarce.

Coming from the city, to me the burning of great logs of wood savours of extravagant luxuriousness.

In the valley, the most common wood is poplar. Unlike the species grown in the lower provinces, it is hard and firm, and

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the equal of maple as fuel. The white poplar is superior to the black, in that it dries more quickly and emits a greater heat.

Sometimes we get a little ash, and "ash when green is fire for a queen."

Our habit is to make a fire of tamarack or spruce, and then to lay green poplar on a bed of hot coals. The fire burns for hours, and if the stoves are closed hermetically, will be found alive in the morning. I have no sympathy with Cowper's expression anent "the close and stupid stove."

I have not yet become expert in laying fires, and "fires, like ghosts and eggs," says Barry Pain, "have to be laid." I am, however, consoled, for Olaf, the stableman, tells me that in Denmark they say it takes a fool to make a fire.

The fire is a good comrade. It never bores one. Its only vagary is, now and then, a spirit of waywardness. You lay the fire in a certain approved fashion, and expect the flames to come through a convenient aperture you leave open, but, likely as not, they will sneak out by some by-path or spurt up into a sudden flame when the embers seem quite dead. A fire that is kicked together is invariably more successful than one carefully planned and architecturally correct.

I asked Tetaquash how fire came first

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to this north-land. He says it originated in the sparks struck out from the rocks by a bear as he bounded up the sides of a hill.

I have noticed that when I open the front of the fire, conversation that has been stilted or laconic becomes easy. Tongues are unloosed, and a softer mood falls on the gathered group. I have no doubt that if there were more wood fires in the city, long-drawn-out courtships would oftener come to a happy-ever-after stage ; and matrimonial forks and knives would more frequently become "spoons." Hot-air registers, or hot-water radiators, give little scope to fancy or romance.

A missionary from Newfoundland told me that, in the interior, the fisherfolk timed his visit by the burning of a log. When he would rise to go, his host would say :

"Time is long ; you've only burned one log," and straightway another big stick would be put on the fire.

This story is more representative of the happy, easy-going manner of country life than any other I know.

XVII

SHUT IN

"Life is far better fun than people dream who fall asleep among the chimney-stacks and telegraph wires."—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.



TWISTED ankle, a soft couch, a large window. What more could any reasonable woman ask?

I have spent a full hour watching two pigeons on my neighbour's eaves. Himself is a bulgy, bump-tious, plethoric person with a great deal of manner which may be translated by the French word *empressement*. To quote the foreword in one of Luther's books, "his gorged paunch is puffed up with uncivil pride."

If he were a man he would be a fine, hearty, beef and beer consuming fellow, and likely as not would wear a chequer-board suit and a plaid tie. I am quite sure he would also have a tendency to punch and profanity.

Herself seems more practical-minded. Just now she has been scolding him for pushing her to the edge of the eave, but he assumes a bristly aspect and incisive manner that I have no doubt she finds

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very terrible. This giving people a piece of your mind is a costly affair.

Her general state seems to be one of semi-somnolence, and she opens and shuts her eyes after the manner of an expensive wax doll.

There ! He has pushed her off again ; and once again. Surely, there is no sinner so bad as the tedious one.

A flight of sparrows has settled down on my window sill. I like the "ah-tette-tette-te" of these rum little sports, these "streeties" of the winged world. One forward chap, with an inquisitive tail and a cocked head, is taking me in, but I remain as impassive as a totem pole, for if I so much as blink my eye, he will take to his wings.

Ah ! there they go. They have alighted on the lawn. What quarrelsome gamins they are ! They believe in standing up for their rights.

One hot-headed, blustering fellow appears to rule the roost. He might be a bit of a Western blizzard. I have it now. He is a walking delegate.

The Padre is telling me that they eat thirty times as much food, proportionately, as a man, and can do an amount of work far beyond his relative power. If a man could consume as much, in proportion to his size, as a sparrow, it would take a whole sheep for each of his meals.

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I don't know how he came by this information. When he goes away I shall "toll" the birds with a chirp and ask them about it. They often answer when I call.

Now that I am shut in, I have my meals upstairs. When Caroline, my maid, brings up my breakfast, she brings the news she has gathered on her rounds the previous evening.

She is a most fearful and wonderful conversationalist. She can talk for hours without stopping. It does not matter if you do not listen. She is content to supply the questions and answers herself.

As she deposited the tray this morning she told me that Alf Jackson is home again, and that they say (Caroline always alleges "they" as her authority) he only goes to Winnipeg for "spreein' and liquor." He "dussent" do it here, because he is "afeard" of his wife.

While searching for my dressing-jacket, she informed me that they were making a subscription for Ella Olson, whose clothes were burned in a fire last week.

"Cinder-Ella?" I asked, but the point was lost on Caroline.

All the while Caroline was lighting the fire she was telling me about an immersion she witnessed last night at the Baptist Church.

Caroline believes religion to be a great

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discomfort to an otherwise pleasant world, and so has scant sympathy for "sich queer goings-on." It seems that the candidate for "dipping" wore a special garb which Caroline was pleased to consider ludicrous. She was convulsed with laughter, and as she laughed on the vowel "o," I found the sound highly contagious, and laughed also.

Mrs. Sammy Robinson was at church too. She has a "near" seal coat. Caroline is puzzled to know how near an animal can come to being a seal and yet miss it.

Mrs. Robinson "gets her clothes on her face." I did not comprehend Caroline's meaning, and was given to understand that Mrs. Robinson has them "charged."

"Pshaw!" snorts Caroline. "The Robinsons ain't paid their meat bill for a year. Pore hired girls can't do the likes of that."

Caroline always has a cash grievance, and Mrs. Robinson's good fortune reminded her that Billy Ball made one thousand dollars last week playing poker with "the steel gang," who came down to Poplar Bluff after laying the rails on the Canadian Northern Railway towards Prince Albert. She has a poor idea of gambling, but "allows" that "some folks make their money awful easy."

A glance at the window and Caroline

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left me to open the door for "Timbertoes," the man who brings the groceries.

She went two steps down the stairs, and hurriedly retraced them to tell me that Mrs. Jack Steele questioned her last night about the news here, "and," said Caroline, "I told her you wuz expectin' a little addition to the family in the spring—about April."

Caroline vanished suddenly, leaving me gasping with chagrin and astonishment at this remarkable and utterly unwarranted announcement.

Yes, Caroline presumes somewhat on the scarcity of domestic help in the neighbourhood. I quite intend telling her so when the opportunity occurs, and when I can screw my courage to the sticking point.

XVIII

APRIL DAYS

"Can trouble dwell with April days?"



KITTY CATKIN has come to town —Kitty, "the impregnable, the vivacious" in her Quaker gown of grey.

The Kinikinik flames across the land in bars of yellow and red. Like Horeb's bush, it burns but is unconsumed.

Fires are everywhere licking up last year's grass. The flames hug the ground except where they meet a patch of snow. Then they pass around it, not even stopping to melt it. In one field I saw snow, whirlwinds of dust, fire, buds bursting in the heat of the flames, and a man seeding.

Spring is late this year. She is a bad fairy—a tricky pixie. "The year's at the spring," but the thermometer is only 30° above zero. All the year's contraries have melted into each other.

Spring is a whimsicality—a hazard. She will and she won't. She tans and freezes you at one and the same time. Someone has said of spring that we never quite get hold of her hands as we do of summer's

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or winter's. Our wooing of her is the delight of pursuit. All her kisses are blown to us.

The girls and I rode into the woods yesterday. The squirrels sneezed, barked and scolded us. They came down low to peek at us and then, with a resentful "chucketing," hustled off to the tree-tops. Their presumption is unique. They are snobs, capitalists, and "high-rollers." It is impossible to make friends with them. Charles Dudley Warner says, "They do not believe in God, these squirrels. They think they can look out for themselves"; and some one else who has observed their traits—I cannot remember who—has given it as his opinion that nothing but the Armenian doctrine of Universal Grace would save them from eternal damnation.

M'sieur Squirrel is a curious combination of this antithesis in life—the idler and the man of action. The Padre flatly contradicts me. He declares M'sieur to be a carpenter, for does he not carry a chisel in his mouth?

I will not be thus contradicted, and so I declare the squirrel was originally a preacher, and I won't give my reasons for the statement. The years have taught me how not to pique the Padre. They have also taught me how best to.

The people here do not consider spring

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has come until the ice has moved out of the river. We saw it move out this week, so are no longer "tenderfeet." We may, hereafter, properly bear the title of "sour-doughs."

The pressure of the ice on its downward career was terrific. It swept out part of the log dam and tore from the river bed the huge spruce piles that held the booms, as though they were inconsequential tooth-picks.

The ice having moved out, this is the day and the hour to "wet a line" for pike. These splendid fellows, locally known as "Jack fish," have left their shy lairs and are heading up the river as though making a direct trail for the North Pole.

There is no need to toss a humbug of feathers to them. They are so hungry that they swallow a bare hook with greedy avidity. I cast my line this morning, and, in less time than it takes to write it, my cork disappeared. My prey nearly pulled me off the bank. I concluded it was a shark. The Padre was excited.

"You've *got* him," he shouted.

"But how am I going to *git* him?" I shrieked back.

The Padre sent a bullet zipping through the water, and still my shark refused to be pulled ashore. The Padre then seized my rod, at the same time making an uncomplimentary remark about what he

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termed my "piscatorial prowess." By this time, the shark had dived under our big log boom. With a now-or-never desperation, I clutched a net and dashed across the boom.

There is an old adage about certain persons and angels, and it is finely applicable here.

* * * * *

When the Padre got me on the bank again, he dropped me with what I considered unnecessary violence. What he said was :

"And now, madam," (with an emphasis on the "madam") "for the future you will *much* oblige me by thinking twice, thinking thrice, thinking *several* times before you attempt to walk a floating log."

I would rather be drowned than saved in so hateful a fashion. Writers of fiction do not tell the truth about these thrilling rescues.

This is why I sat in my moist misery and called the Padre a black-hearted, stupid, cruel animal. It pleased him to scream mightily with laughter, and derisively to present me with a wreath of honour made from willows. Ugh ! I could fairly eat him.


My fishing pole has almost reached the Arctic Circle by this time.

XIX

BLOSSOM PROPHECIES

"And he is happiest who hath power
To gather wisdom from a flower."

—WORDSWORTH.

N the swampy lee of the woods there are many blossom prophecies. One of these sunny noons there will be "a million emeralds burst from ruby buds."

These big honey-coloured ones are swollen with blossoms that seem wary of uncurling themselves.

Little green points are pushing through the flesh-coloured rinds of the saplings, and, here and there, a soft, crumpled leaf has shyly peeped from a maroon bud.

Tightly-clenched fists of green hold well their purple, pink, or yellow secrets. But "rough winds do shake the darling buds of May," and soon these firstlings will push out into gay points, looking for all the world like coloured crayons.

The dandelions have danced over the lush green in sheets of gold that rinse the eyes.

They say the gipsies call the dande-

Blossom Prophecies

lion "the queen's great hairy dog-flower"—a number of words to a small stalk. There is a place in England—in Kent—called Dandelion Castle, and it has a bell with this inscription :

"John de Dandelion with his great dog,
Brought over this hill on a mill cog."

The dandelion makes no secret of his presence. Perhaps this is why some despise this

"Dear common flower that grows beside
the way,
Fringing the dusty way with harmless
gold."

"A mean flower," you say. Yes, but "the meanest flower that grows gives thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears." Once, in springtime, we twisted their sun-kissed blooms into wreaths for a sunny head, and when the dandelions were "changed to vanishing ghosts," we longed for "the touch of a vanished hand."

In these first weeks of leafing time, it is good to stand still and listen. One may hear the voice of the Lord walking in the garden. Nature is off her guard, and will tell her secrets if you will only keep quiet enough.

In the wood-ways, the poplar is putting on a "bonnie green gown." All winter, naked and unashamed, she wore naught but her own white skin. But now spring

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has come, and she is donning her transfiguration robes of "unnamed green." Already I can hear the faint whisper of her skirts. She has a graceful way of keeping company, this Miss Popple. I am almost certain Sir Spruce is in love with her, and if, like Tennyson's "Talking Oak," she could plagiarise a heart and answer with a voice, she would, in a pretty lisp, tell me all about his wooing. I fear me he is a dour, straight-laced fellow, and does not make much progress.

The Padre says the crystal globes that roll down the face of Sir Spruce are only turpentine, but I have a shrewd idea they are tears.

I saw a gopher to-day, and a farmer told me that three years ago a gopher was a scarcity in these parts. Now they are almost as plentiful as in southern Manitoba. He attributes this to the cropping of the land; also to the fact that the wolves are being driven farther north.

This nimble miner is the merriest thing on the farm. It gets through the business of life on a dance. All its energies are intensified in its tail. It is the last thing to wave defiance at you, as he playfully dives into his little mound.

Like the conies, they are "a feeble folk," but "exceeding wise." Just scoop out a burrow, and see if he who gathers in summer is not a wise son. Many

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a golden bit these frisky rascals with their queer antics cost the farmer, and in Manitoba, at one time, the Government gave the Indians a bounty of two cents each for gopher tails. Some Indians made as much as \$10 a day, and Mr. Marsh, a merchant at Elkhorn, told me that one day he paid out \$700 in awards. The game went on merrily, and so did the Government largess until it was discovered that the wily Indian was confining his efforts to the gophers' tails to the entire neglect of their heads, so that they might go free to raise fresh broods of nice little tails at a penny each. Nowadays the farmer poisons the gophers with wheat boiled in Government strychnine.

The gopher is a very obliging little chap. He will stand up like a begging pug and let you shoot at him. Of course, being a woman, your bullet is far wide of the mark, and, flicking the wet off his legs, he dives into his earthen fastness only to reappear nonchalantly a moment or two later to give you another chance. Eventually, you will whistle him out of his burrow and capture him with a noosed string.

XX

A MAY DAY IN THE MORNING

"Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west."—MRS. BROWNING.



THE time of singing birds has come. And how they sing! Now it is the lark who warbles with ecstatic joy, a song of "gaiety without eclipse." His notes are yellow with golden sunshine.

It seems impossible that such a flood of strong, clear sounds should come from so tiny a throat. He is a kinsman of the English skylark, this feathered sprite, and builds his nest on the ground among the long grasses. He sings as he rises and falls in the air, each flight inspiring him to fresh roulades of melody.

It must have been the lark Ruskin had in mind when he said a bird was little more than a drift of air brought into form by plumes. Andrew Carnegie believes something like this, too, for he says he would as lief shoot an angel as a song-bird, for both must be akin because they sing and fly,

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Following a murmuring "weet-weet" this morning, I came upon a brace of plovers. They ran a few yards before rising. This may have been to deceive me as to the location of their nest, where, doubtless, there are young birds with wide-open mouths and budding wings.

I am informed—perhaps misinformed—that hen plovers are of the advanced type of female, and so, perforce, the male bird attends to the nursery duties, even to hatching the eggs.

There is a vast deal of family talk going on in the sleughs, where the ducks are busy making arrangements for their damp nests. The broad-winged drakes sweep in and out with gawky gestures and strident clamour. They do not seem to be accomplishing anything. It may be that their movements are the results of mere fussiness, but more likely they are prompted by a desire to display their satin-like breast-feathers, for every drake is something of a dandy.

In the thickets that flower of the air, the red-headed woodpecker, is laughing loudly. He never tires of his joke. His head is his crown of glory. In times ago, all people were agreed there was something astray with a red-headed man, and so, in mediæval paintings, Judas Iscariot was represented with a carrotty

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poll. The Persians, however, being fire-worshippers, were an exception, for they dyed their hair and beards a blood-red; and of late years smart ladies have stained their locks a bright copper colour. Not long since, a Cincinnati newspaper said that twenty-one men in that City who married red-haired women were colour-blind. A person who is colour-blind thinks red is black. Perhaps this is what the woodpecker is laughing at.

And on this May Day in the morning, low-flying wood-doves with ash-blue wings sun themselves in the open pasture lands. It is now that the "livelier iris" shines upon these quaint love-birds. And this is the day he sobs and urges the old, sweet song in his full-throated, full-hearted way. In a sudden tide of passion he is telling madam, his mate, that he is love-sick. From the length and strength of his wooing, I should judge the lady is not kind. It may be that she is a bachelor maid. Scientists who pretend to know tell that there are such among birds who are either "uncertain, coy and hard to please," or who prefer the idle life their position makes possible.

In truth, all the fashionable folk in feathers are in an ecstasy. They plunge and whirl through the air in erratic, amatory flights, uttering those half-keyed, thrilling cries peculiar to mating time.

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" 'Tis love creates their melody, and all
This waste of music is the voice of love."

The story of love is always the same in fish, flesh, and fowl. It is only the plot, actors, and staging that show variety of detail. In all masculine love, if you care to look, you will see the same fickleness, the same surreptitious amours, the same untaught, instinctive, passionate form of egotism usually designated as jealousy. In the feminine, there is still the old, but ever-effective simulation of indifference. As the male advances, female retires. To sum up the situation brutally, she keeps the tiger starving that he may freely clutch at the lure.

And these are the tactics of every aimless, nameless mite of a bird that flutters a wing in these northern skies. Ah, what an ancient humbug is Love!

In the southern provinces it is "Opeechee, the robin," who ushers in spring with his clear, ringing, military call, but in this nor'land its harbinger is the soft sibilation of the blackbird.

Sometimes she has red wings and, for a bill, a dagger of gold, but oftener she is only our "coal-black lady." She twitters over the weather-stained hayricks and freshly broken sods with apparently no higher object than living to live.



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Her appearance is simultaneous with that of Herr Crow. I always dislike the crow. He is an "old ebon buccaneer." His nigritude is his livery of sin. If he were a man, doubtless he would belong to the fraternity who rudely demand loans from people before being introduced to them.

He is the feathered image of caution, this Herr Crow. He has learned the art of being talkative and, at the same time, reticent. He is the embodiment of secrecy. Watch him put his sapient head on one side as if he means to prophesy, and all he says is, "cruk-cruk-croak!"

His croak is a dismal, evil-boding note. It is strident, raucous, awful, and leaves nothing to the imagination. His voice gives you the impression that it hurts to use it. Now all the world knows that voice reveals soul and is an infallible indication of both nature and culture.

On this matter of crows, as is his wont, the Padre disagrees with me; for he pretends to like the crow. He divides all birds into big birds, little birds, and crows. He knows a song about the crows. The crow says to a poet:

"I am a crow, you know;
I know a thing or two.
I was born on a hill,
And have always had my will;
I am grit, and gristle, and brain."

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I like Mrs. Browning's poem better :

" 'Tis written in the Book ; He heareth the young
ravens when they cry,
And yet they cry for carrion."

In every sleugh and pond the frogs are holding a *soirée musicale*. Every bull-frog says, "More rum." Indeed, there is not a note of which they are capable which they do not perform with all the variations. They are assuredly "the humming-birds of the swamp."

Robert Louis Stevenson tells us he used to sit at night on the veranda of his home at Silverado and listen to the song of the frogs—or was it crickets?—"and wonder why these creatures were so happy, and what was wrong with man that he also did not wind up his days with an hour or two of shouting."

The Japanese, too, like frogs. They have a singing-frog which they keep in a cage, and to which they write love-songs, for at trysting-hour the frog-chorus is at its height.

And there is Caroline, our maid. She says if we kill a toad or frog our cow will give bloody milk.

For my part, I prefer the attitude of the wealthy French landowners who, in pre-Labour Union days, used to keep the peasants busy all night beating the moats with flails, to keep the frogs from

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croaking. It was Martin Luther who said :

“ The croaking of frogs edifies nothing at all ; it is mere sophistry and fruitless.”


The Abderites went into voluntary exile rather than share their country unequally with frogs. These Abderites were so stupid that the Romans made proverbs about them. The croaking of the frogs, doubtless, had upset their mental balance.

All this thrilling roundelay of “ krink ” and “ kronk ” in our village sleughs is the frog’s way of thrusting his amours upon his fair one. In all “ the majesty of mud ” he is trying to persuade her to cast her lot with his. He is serenading her, so to say, and telling her she is sweet enough to eat.

But this is courtship all the world over—the man all tongue ; the woman all ears.

XXI

PARADISE WAS NEVER LOST

 SHOT at a jack-snipe in the sleugh to-day, but missed him. Once, in southern Manitoba, I drew on a snipe, but the Indian lads would not permit me to shoot. They call him "the yellow legs" and assured me the certain penalty for killing him was death from lightning.

There are loons a-plenty here. The term "crazy as a loon" seems to be quite unmerited. This opprobrious comparison may have arisen from the weird, defiant laughter of these birds, but they are wise enough to keep their heads on their bodies, and this is something in these pot-hunting days. Loons can dive as quick as you can shoot. They are quite as dexterous as the slippery, elusive, sea-side acrobats who dodge "penny-a-throw" balls.

The word "loon" is supposed to refer to its incapacity, and is from the same root as "lame." They do not walk on land, as they are web-footed, but fly with great rapidity.

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The sleugh is on one of our farms. It is covered with rushes, dwarf poplars, moose-willows, and spruce. Some day we will drain it off so that it may produce hay. It is gay now with marsh-marigolds. Some woodmen in British Columbia once told me these plants were agreeable and wholesome as "greens." The buds, after being pickled in salt and vinegar, may be used as capers. The flowers themselves remain fresh after the picking longer than their contemporary, the American cowslip.

The marigold, or meadow gowan, is one of the "plants of the sun," the "golden flower." Indeed, it looks very much like the buttercup, except that it is thicker and more stalky. It is the flower Shakespeare had in mind when he wrote, "And winking Mary-buds begin to ope their golden eyes."

The Star of Bethlehem, or the "Eleven o'clock Lady," is in bloom. So are the cowslips. Everywhere the ground is splashed with their gold. We make cowslip balls, and put them in our hats for pom-poms. The luxury of it! In Germany I have heard the cowslip called "Our Lady's Key."

It is surprising how many flowers are named after the Blessed Virgin. I have been looking them up. Here are some :

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The mulleins are "Our Lady's Candles."

The harebell : "Our Lady's Mint."

The honeysuckle : "Our Lady's Fingers."

The forget-me-nots : "Our Lady's Eyes."

The clematis : "Our Virgin's Bower."

Then there are "Marygolds," "Lady's Smocks," and the "Madonna Lily." "Our Lady's Bedstraw" is so called because of the manger in the stable.

With what joy I ride over the land this morning ! In God's great blue all things are possible, and all things are fair. I am possessed with a pagan love of life. The Padre would probably analyse my sensations critically and class them as "ebullitions of animal well-being arising from the equanimity of good digestion and well oxygenated blood" ; but the Padre is in Winnipeg and there is no one else to disconcert me.

This field is a mile long. There are seventeen horses and five men at work on it. I like to follow in the wake of the gang ploughs, that I may drink in the odour of the newly turned earth. It is the most strangely subtle odour in all the world. It is the concentrated essence of the four seasons.

The man on the seeder is beckoning to me. He has run out of seed, or, rather,

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the seed has run out. A mistake has been made ; black oats have been substituted for white. He explains the difference. The yield of black oats is slightly greater than the white variety, but it is useless for milling, and hence not so profitable a crop. It is quite as good as the white, however, for feeding purposes.

I promise to hurry off and buy some white seed. He requires two bushels to the acre. The grain must weigh about forty pounds to the bushel, and be clear from wild oats or other noxious weeds.

Ah ! I *am* a farmer after all. I always wanted to be one, but my friends scream with laughter when I confess to this simple idea.

“ Farmers look happy,” I argue.

“ That’s because they know no better,” sneer the candid friends ; and I suspect they are right.

Farmers do not know that all the creeds are outworn and that the world is very, very old, and that all its dolls are stuffed with sawdust, and that the big causes and immortal pleasures are not worth the candle. We are much better posted in cities.

* * * * *

If Caroline would only come back, like Douglas in the song, in the old likeness that I knew. Oh ! if she only would.

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Our new "baggage" has all the qualifications of a good cook—the strong arm, critical taste, high temper, and love of good eating. She cooks well, except on Sundays, when she asserts we ought to eat cold "vittals." Perhaps there is logic in her arguments and religion too, but as for myself, I hold to the amended maxim, the better the day the better the feed.

Every Sunday there are secret plots of kitchen fenianism, sulks, and verbal blows. When I venture to remonstrate, she regards me with a superior stare that convinces me I am dirt. With a humility natural to this conviction, I meekly retire and hide myself.

We are tired of the tyranny of the broom—tired of plain living and high thinking. We sigh for the days of Mrs. Pepys, that we might beat the saucy wench into becoming obedience. We will, however, take all the abuse our Lady Superior chooses to give us, seeing it is the year of grace, 19—. We would rather take it than sweep, cook, and burn our fingers. Jill is as good as her mistress every day in the week, and twice as good on Sundays.

XXII

THE WESTERN LIAR

 I WOULD not like to say that "all men are liars," but I will say the practice is very common in the West. Lying is the "darling sin" of all males who once touch longitude 90°.

But considering the many lies of which Westerners are the objects, they tell marvellously few in return.

Lying is not one of the Westerner's failures. It is his success.

He is a liar of the finest courage.

He has a fine genius and consummate panorama of fancy.

He is a versatile liar. He reminds us of what Horace Walpole said of Shelburne: "He can only deceive by telling the truth."

And why may he not change colour? When the English forget-me-not opens it is a pale yellow, then faintly pinkish, and ends by being blue. The wallflower, evening primrose, virginia stock, and convolvulus change colour to suit the occasion. Why should not the Westerner go to the lily, consider her ways, and be wise?

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'Tis better to have lived and lied than never to have lied at all.

I heartily agree with Mark Twain. Lying is a noble accomplishment and should be encouraged.

The best citizens are the biggest liars. They do not lie because they lack courage to speak the truth—not a bit of it. Their lies are mere exaggeration, born of excessive patriotism for their home and country. They have the biggest crops, the biggest storms, the biggest bank-accounts, the biggest trees, the biggest babies. Of course they have. Truly, "it is our sins that make us great."

It is on skilful and artistic lying the Westerner depends for getting in fine narrative effect. He is like the Assyrians, who in depicting on the bas-reliefs of their palaces the figures of colossal bulls and lions, represent them with five legs, that they may be seen from every point of view with four.

I once heard a Canadian tell that when he visited the Congressional Library at Washington, and was overwhelmed with its beauty, he said to a friend :

"There is nothing in our language that will express it."

"Yes, there is," said his friend, "but I forget it."

Now the Westerner would have expressed it, for his long practice in the art

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of lying has given him presence of mind and prompt ingenuity in such situations. He could have expressed it to a hair's breadth.

Swift once wrote that although the devil was the father of lies, like many other great inventors he had lost much of his reputation by the continual improvements that have been made upon him.

The lies of the Westerner are not to be classed as a recrudescence of the old Adam. They are only the response of humanity to an emergency.

Besides, truth, while it is very beautiful, is really not at all necessary. It is only a luxury.

It is not fashionable, either, to be truthful.

Congreve, in "Love for Love," makes Miss Prue say, "Must I tell a lie, then?" and Tattle reply, "Yes, if you would be well-bred. All well-bred people lie."

Indeed, the highest civilisation encourages lies—not necessarily spoken ones, but lies of the impressionistic kind. Who wants to marry a woman without hair, teeth, or modesty?

In the eastern provinces people do not acknowledge to lying. They make "pretensions," allow "poetic license," "draw a long bow," practise "the commercial lie," or are merely "practical

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politicians"; but Western people, not being so highly civilised; believe in the straight lie. They hold that truth is a virtue to be much praised and little practised, for truthful people are always obnoxious.

"My son," said Douglas Jerrold, "he who in this world resolves to speak only the truth, will speak only what *is too good* for the mass of mankind to understand, and will be persecuted accordingly."

And then all the world knows that it is suicidal to be truthful, for truthful people are wont to die young. In evidence of this fact, Park, in his Travels, relates that a party of Moors made an attack on the flocks of a village, and a youth of the place was wounded in the affray. The natives conveyed him home while his mother preceded the mournful group, and, with streaming eyes, exclaimed, "He never, never told a lie." The moral is obvious.

To sum up the whole situation: the "jolly, slogging statements," the "remarkably ingenious and painstaking evasions of truth," to which the Westerner is addicted, are only indigenous growths.

It is natural that in a land where despondency is unknown, the whole lion-hearted generation should be addicted to magnifying themselves and their wonderful country.

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A lie is nothing serious to a Westerner. He need not check his reputation on such occasions. His "stretchers" are mere natural ebullitions arising purely from rewarded toil, prosperity, and a singularly ozonated atmosphere.

XXIII

"LONG ABOUT KNEE-DEEP IN JUNE"

"It seems such a maladjustment of time when there are twelve long months in the year, only to have one June . . . June goes by every year like an express train, while we stand dazed at some little siding."

—BLISS CARMAN.

UST now, our sleugh is alive with "fluttered folk and wild." One could sit for hours to watch the goings-on of the birds, and to listen to their velvet-soft notes.

Drunken-flighted jays strike a jarring note with their harsh, gay laughter. The jay has a fierce, bold eye. He is a "blade" in the clothes of gentility, with the manners of a navvy.

There are willow-grouse in plenty. They are called "fool-hens," because they permit themselves to be killed so easily.

The partridge has a nest of chicks on the sleugh-edge. She rises almost from under our feet, with a queer, whirring flight. She is a compact, active-looking bird. In the autumn, she and her chicks will form themselves into a covey—the most gun-shy covey on the fields.

From the dark spruces, now and then,

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comes the tremulous, mournful cry of the screech-owl. It is the ill-omened wail of the banshee.

But there is always a Satan in every world. Here it is a cast of hawks that hover in the sky with slow, majestic movements, full of power and grace. It would seem that their aerial flight is aimless till, suddenly, one is seen to fall from the sky like a feathered Lucifer, seeking whom he may devour.

Butterflies, like light-winged Psyches, chase each other into the sunshine for the mere fun of the thing. They dance over the flowers with taunting abandon, "perk on a rose" or float on the air with silken balance. It was Hugo who wrote that butterflies are bits of love-letters that have been torn up.

The Padre is brutally materialistic. He says butterflies are only beautiful caterpillars that nature has dressed up and sent out to be married.

He is very superior, too. He said to-day that "the *Papilionaceæ* are closely related to the roses, but differ conspicuously in their bilateral form." It was some time before I realised he was talking of the peaflowers.

He calls daisies "ray-florets of the simplest corymbiferous type." I made a wager that he was making up the words to impress me.

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He is a person of obdurate and unsympathetic nature, for he made me pay.



they are with a Lord ants sow carry the

It is usual for violets to grow in family groups. In the valley



gregarious and grow splendid prodigality. Avebury says the the violets, for they seeds to their nests.

I have not seen “The Step-mother’s Eye,” or yellow violet, yet. All I find are blue or pale lilac. I like the lilac best. It is a colour Nature uses sparingly.

The violet has a shy habit of hiding her face with her hands. She is “clothed with humility,” but her hidden secret steals out, “sweet smelling as a thousand perfumes.”

“So sweet are violets,” writes Christina Rossetti, “that violet is but a second name for sweetness.”

They droop sadly after being picked, just as shy, modest flowers are wont to do.

The columbine has hung out its bells. We might have adopted it in Manitoba as our provincial flower. Its cornucopias are significant of full and plenty within our borders, and our overflow for the Empire. It ought to be our provincial flower, too, because of its insignia of

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office—five spurs, and to each its honey-laden sepals.

Again the Padre differs. He points out that the *Aquilegia* (columbine) comes from the Latin *aquila*, an eagle, and *lego*, to gather. The name is descriptive of the nectaries which bear a fanciful resemblance to the closing claws of the eagle. He considers this as in no way typical of Western attributes. Some there are who might be inclined to argue this point.

Grant Allen, who studied the subject of the fertilisation of flowers, said that purple, lilac, and blue flowers specially bid for the favour of bees and butterflies. This is probably why I noticed the butterflies among the columbines.

Moreover, he tells us that yellow flowers depend upon the beetles, white upon small flies, and red flowers upon blue-bottle flies. The livid red ones actually resemble decaying meat in their colour and odour, thus inducing the flies to walk into their parlour.

I have not seen a worm or a snake in this country. With the exception of Snake Creek, in Saskatchewan, the trail of the serpent is entirely unknown in the eastern part of the West.

The perfume in the air has a tang to it. I feel it throng my pulses, swell my

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throat, and clutch in my hands. It is almost wicked.

Some ingenious person has recently drawn up a pharmacopœia of sweet smells. He says that odours of aromatic leaves, flowers and all green plants have a virtue for different physical or mental conditions. I think he must be right about it. He says the Maréchal Niel rose proves invigorating in cases of depression; the scarlet nasturtium elevates the mind; wild thyme renews the vital energies, as do sweet-briar, wallflower, and white honeysuckle.

It is remarkable that the sense of smell should be regarded by many as almost vulgar. It is not good form to speak of “a smell,” whether pleasant or otherwise. Yet it is the most acute of all the senses. It is capable of calling back to memory that which has been buried for years. The odour of a single rose will call up with sharp intensity and exquisite suffering the memory of a white face in a black, flower-swathed coffin. The tang and freshness of spearmint, or the smell of a particular cigarette, will vividly bring back scenes of brae or boulevard that were long since forgotten.

This sense probably bears the stigma of degeneracy because of the remarkable action smells or perfumes have on the human body. One odour will produce

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nausea, another an exhilarating effect on the mind. Hysteria is sometimes produced from a mere odour. The first smell of the sea wonderfully affects a landsman's nervous system.

Indeed, the absence of odour is considered by most people to be preferable even to a pleasing one. The Latin writers, gibing at the use of scent in their day, said, "There is the same smell in slave and gentleman when both are perfumed," and "He who smells well, smells ill." There is a lurking suspicion in some minds that perfume is used to cover up a disagreeable odour, just as the French burn pastilles in stuffy or sick rooms to cover smells.

The use of perfume has come down to us from time immemorial, and, if Milton can be trusted, certainly from Eden. In Greek mythology the invention and use of perfumes is attributed to the immortals, and, according to fables, men derived their knowledge of them from the indiscretion of *Æone*, one of the nymphs of *Venus*. Whenever the Olympian gods honoured mortals with their visits, they left behind an ambrosial odour as an unequivocal token of their divine nature.

The Talmud directs that one-tenth of a bride's dowry be set apart for the purchase of scents. Solomon remarks, "Ointments and perfumes rejoice the heart."

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Cleopatra in her barge, with its burnished poop and purple sails, used perfumes so cloying “that all winds were love-sick with them.” The Empress Josephine sweetened her complexion daily with boiling milk poured over a basin of fresh violets. Her favourite perfume was musk.

In “the good old times,” the sheets were always scented with lavender before being put on a bed.

Richelieu used so much perfume in his apartments that unwary strangers who entered them were almost stifled.

In the times of Queen Bess, even perfumed boots were used. The Queen herself used sweet-scented candles in her boudoir, and perfumed cakes of condensed violets and roses were thrown into the fire. Her wigs were scented with musk.

Coming down to our own days, we read that a certain English nobleman scatters perfume from his automobile.

That the sense of smell is keener in some persons than in others is beyond question. A London physician of large practice asserts that, owing to his extremely sensitive smell, he can foretell the coming of death forty-eight hours. He says that when a patient comes within two days of death a peculiar earth smell is emitted from the body. When the fatal disease is slow in its progress, the

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odour makes its appearance as much as three days beforehand, but when the disease is of a galloping kind the doctor receives much shorter warning. He attributes the smell to mortification, which begins within the body before life is extinct. Dogs are thought to have this sense, for hunting hounds have been observed to begin a mournful baying a day or two before their master died.

Thoreau's faculty of smell was very sensitive. In describing a circus, he says :

"Approaching, I perceive the peculiar scent which belongs to such places, a certain sourness in the air, suggesting trodden grass and cigar smoke."

Zola has been held up by critics as possessing an atavistic smell. Certain it is that he was keenly alive to the osmic accompaniment of every person or natural object.

He had the nose of a hound on the trail. In "L'Assommoir" he gives minute descriptions of the smells in the house of the laundress. In a like manner he characterises all personages by smell. Madame Campardon has "a good, fresh perfume of autumn fruits." Albine, Françoise, Serge, and Désirée are also described in like manner.

Guy de Maupassant minutely describes his olfactory observations, and Charles

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G. D. Roberts makes Barbara Ladd almost a victim to every passing odour.

That musk was a great favourite with the ancients is evident, for the Koran tells us that the waters of Paradise were more odoriferous than musk. Its floor was composed of pure wheaten flour mixed with musk and saffron; and houris' bodies consist of nothing but musk.

Musk is taken from the musk deer of India and China, and is remarkable for its diffusiveness and subtlety. Everything in its vicinity becomes affected by it, and long retains the odour. The English article is coarse and rank, but the French musk is delicate and piquant.

Some have said that the famous balm of Gilead was musk; but this is a mistake. The balm, once so common, is now so rare that only the Sultan can be supplied. It is distilled from the amyris, a bush which formerly covered the mountains of Gilead.

It is fashionable to say “I do not like musk,” but the largest perfumers declare that the taste for musk has not abated. Indeed, it is used as a fixative for, and to tone up, nearly all other perfumes.

The preference for certain perfumes has an ethical side, and it is not straining a point to say that the moral attributes of individuals can be approximately arrived at by the perfumes they use. This

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preference known, their mental and moral traits can be told with tolerable accuracy. Many may think this theory eccentric and unfounded, but such is not the case. Moreover, we have found different countries, cities, and towns to have favourite perfumes in accord with their characteristics. "China Town" affects a very different odour from that of a mining village, and Boston would scorn the preference of a Western city. In one city, perfumers sell more of lily of the valley than any other scent; in another vera violetta leads the van; in a third it is frangipane or white rose.

Frangipane is a very old perfume: the invention of a Roman noble, whose name it bears. It is composed of every known spice in equal proportions, to which is added ground orris root, in equal weight with one per cent of musk and civet. It has the merit of being the most lasting perfume made. Its use stands for individuality and a liking for the old and quaint.

Eau-de-Cologne, above all other perfumes, connotes taste. Crab-apple, geranium, and orris belong to this class.

The fragrance of oriental woods is appreciated most by people of marked individuality, or people who are capricious, perverse, and deceitful.

Musk postulates a strong animal

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nature. It clearly stands for virility and power. Most people have a sneaking regard for it.

The white rose, wallflower, and patchouli are admired by the indolent and unambitious. Their extensive use indicates mental and moral flabbiness.

XXIV

MOSQUITOTIDE



THE time of death and the time of falling leaves have been sung; but the time of mosquito is the most serious of all.

Just now we are sore let and hindered by these sanguinary pests. To sit out is literally "the price of blood." It is useless for dwellers in southern cities to scoff and say we exaggerate the evil propensities of these little midgets, for was it not "the little people" who killed the very strong man Kwasind on the river Taquamenaw?

These mosquitoes are ubiquitous, insatiable, and hot-tongued with all the spirit of the furies. They walk, they drop, they fly, they swim, they come up from below, steal rides, blow in; but they are always here. Everywhere you meet them, and are meat for them. Like Pharaoh's frogs, they come up into thine house, and into thy bedchamber and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading troughs.

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They are not only omnipotent, and omnivorous, but omnipresent. You may kill them by bushelfuls, and their phalanxes are apparently undiminished. Insectivorous birds have only to open their mouths to have them filled. The same applies to men and women, for that matter.

I have been keeping a record of the bites I have had since the beginning of the season, also of the mosquitoes killed—a kind of debtor and creditor affair. They balance up thus:—

Bites, 583,672,154,871. Deaths 13.

Stewart Edward White declares that the mosquito is superior to all fly pests in that it holds still to be killed. It is not necessary to wave your arms or slap frantically; all you have to do is to place your finger calmly and firmly on the spot and you get the deliberate brute every time. This sounds well in theory but it is not always practicable or, for that matter, modest.

When this thrice-accursed insect strikes a trail around your shoulders, or even your ankles, he must be allowed to pursue the even tenor of his way unmolested. It is quite useless to bid him take his beak from out your heart and his form from off your door. He will do nothing of the kind.

Besides, he seldom affects a flippant, racy lightheartedness to put you on your

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guard. As a general thing, he is a procrastinating miscreant, a baritone brute who skulks about you undecidedly to find the most unprotected part of your epidermis. You do not know where his geographical expedition has led him until you feel a puncture, sharp as an electric burn. Or it may be you are wholly unaware of his visit until you see the outward and visible signs of his inward and unspiritual tunnelling.

A man once came to this north country and described the habits of the mosquito thus :

“ He lights upon your head,
A naughty word is said,
As with a rap,
A vicious slap,
You bang the spot where he is not.

“ He stops and rubs his gauzy wings,
He soars aloft and gently sings,
He sits and grins,
And then begins
To select a spot for another shot.”

This man indubitably wrote of hornets. Josh Billings is of my way of thinking, too. He says :

“ The hornet iz a red-hot child ov natur, ov sudden impreshuns, and sharp konklusions. The hornet alwus fites at short range, and never argys a case. They settle all ov their disputes bi lettin their

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javelin fly and are certain and anxious to hit as a mule iz."

The mosquitoes have no such vagaries. They are epicures, and like to dally with their food before finally tasting.

Edison's Encyclopædia vouchsafes an interesting piece of information about them. It declares that if you hold your breath when a mosquito has his bill in you, it cannot withdraw till you breathe again. It is seldom an encyclopædia is humorous at the expense of the public.

But even if you did hold your breath, it would be a mistake to give a mosquito the quietus. It is a mistake at any time. They are only the slow, clumsy ones that get killed. The fittest survive, and so the result cannot fail to be a spryer and more agile race.

If, however, you *are* foolish enough to slaughter them, perhaps there is no way more effective and, at the same time more amusing, than shooting them with a 32-calibre revolver. You are sure to bore a little hole in them somewhere.

It is a well-known fact, too, that mosquitoes have a passion for black. If you sit beside a fat person dressed in this colour they will leave you happily alone.

Surveyors sometimes lather their faces and necks with a vile decoction warranted to keep off these pertinacious insects. It consists of oil of tar, oil of

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pennyroyal, oil of cedar, and castor oil, in equal parts. But the appetite of a foraging party of mosquitoes is generously uncritical. They find this application highly nutritive above all diet. It is, to them, a sweet savour of Araby the Blest—just a mere tang and sweetness that stimulates them to renewed efforts.

Every Indian has a different story regarding the creation of mosquitoes ; but nearly all regard them as agents of an evil spirit.

The Indians in British Columbia have a tradition that a bad woman who lived on the banks of the Fraser River caught young children and carried them in a basket woven of water snakes. One day the children peeped out of the basket and saw her digging a pit and making stones hot in the fire, and they knew she was going to cook them as Indians cook their meat ; so they plotted together what they would do. By and by the old hag came to the basket and lifted them out one by one and told them to dance around her on the grass, and she began putting something in their eyes so that they could not open them ; but the elder ones watched their opportunity, and while she was putting the hot stones in the pit, they all rushed forward and toppled her over, and piled fire into the pit on top of her till she was burned to ashes. But her evil

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spirit lived after her, for out of her ashes, blown about by the wind, sprang the dreadful pest of mosquitoes.

In this story the setting is picturesque, the plot good, the action quick, the *dénouement* just.

A certain northern chronicler relates that Kitch Manitou became angry when, one day, all the men married all the women and a universal honeymoon began so that no one would harvest the rice or the corn. At this juncture Kitch created *saw-gi-may*, the mosquito, and sent him forth to work his will and, as the chronicler puts it, "this took the romance out of the situation" so that the honeymoon suddenly waned.

This sounds as if it might be the true story.

The mosquito's very make-up indicates that he means mischief. He breathes from his tail. This is in order that the insatiable little beast may have his bill free to dilute your blood with his yellow poison.

His wings are too swift to be meant for any innocent purpose. The wild duck makes nine strokes a second, but the ordinary mosquito makes 330 in the same period.

I have never been able to examine his body minutely, but I am told—and have no reason to doubt the fact—that

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his body folds up like a field-glass so that he can elongate himself to take all the blood he can get.

It was Lafcadio Hearn who said he wanted to have the chance of being re-incarnated in the form of a mosquito, so that he might sing its pungent song and bite some people he knew. Lafcadio must have meant the missionaries in Japan. He did not approve of them, nor have I ever met a missionary who approved of Hearn.

Speaking of "the thin, pungent sound," it has always been a question in our family as to what the mosquito really *does* sing. Is it a requiem, a lullaby, or merely grace before meat? Perhaps it is all three.

One member of the family declares he is "cussing around promiscuous." It has also been suggested that he sings "Drill ye tarriers, drill," but it seems to me he is whining an obligato recitative in C minor.

Sometimes he sings "cuisine! cuisine!" as through a paper and fine-toothed comb. One thing is certain; his song is the very sound of pain, if pain could speak.

It is said that everything has a use. It is hard to guess the *raison d'être* of this headlong blackguard, unless it is to humble the people of this north country. Speak-

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ing metaphorically, there is no other fly in their ointment.

The mosquito has not a single virtue, or if he should have one, like those of Montaigne, it "got in by stealth."

Mr. Punch thinks he found one and penned it thus :

" I bite to live
(Some live to bite),
I sting from sheer necessity
——not spite."

Being an Englishman, living in England, Mr. Punch can know nothing whatever about the programme of the mosquito.

It is passing strange that the white man, who has conquered rattlesnakes, Indians, small-pox, and various kinds of "varmint," should run and hide from the mosquito. The mosquitoes have come up and possessed the land, and no man is so bold as to say them nay.

Ask a warrior why this is and, likely as not, he will tell you it is useless to reason with a mosquito, for only the female insects bite.

Although scientists have stated this to be a fact, I don't believe a word of it. The horrid lust of food and inordinate craving for variety evidenced by the biting mosquito is, to my mind, a complete refutation of the theory.

When Dolly Winthorpe offered Master Marner some lard-cakes, she said :

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"Men's stomicks is made so comical, they want a change; they do, I know, God help 'em."

And what made trouble in Eden? Man and his food. I am not unmindful of the fact that learned commentators have ever laid the evil at the door of woman, but nevertheless it is a true, if not generally understood, fact that the serpent who tempted our mother Eve with the lure of the forbidden, is spoken of in Holy Writ as a male.

Some of us there are who think scientists might be better employed than in gibing at women. We bespeak their efforts on behalf of the stingless mosquito. Luther Burbank of Santa Rosa has, by crossing and recrossing the cactus, robbed it of its stings. It is the mosquitoes' turn now.

Physicians tell us that in the southern states of America, yellow fever, malaria, and elephantiasis (where the victim's legs and arms grow to be the size of grain sacks) are propagated by the mosquitoes. There are also well authenticated cases where violent insanity has been caused by mosquito bites.

Fifteen thousand deaths were recorded last year in the United States from malaria, showing that the mosquito's bite is by no means a trivial thing. This is one reason the Agricultural

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Department has sounded the tocsin of war.

The mosquito lays eggs on fresh or brackish water. The eggs are fastened in a sort of raft which swims on the surface. These hatch into "wiggletails" which, like whales, are obliged to come to the surface to breathe.

Professor L. O. Howard has discovered that a film of coal-oil on a breeding pond infallibly kills every wiggletail in fifteen minutes, because it shuts them off from air.

We have been figurating on extirpating the mosquitoes in our neighbourhood, but concluded it would take the whole output of the Standard Oil Company for several years, and at the end of the time we would have no water to drink, wash in, for fire protection, or to float logs. Then we would have to kill all our cattle, for so big a space as a cow's hoof-print would breed a billion mosquitoes. It would cost several million dollars to drain off the marsh lands, and then we still would have our ponds to dispose of.

On the whole, I like best the singularly interesting suggestion that has appeared in the category of vibrations. It is asserted that by sounding a certain note on a tuning-fork these noxious insects may be violently attracted by the sound, and by rigging up a screen through which an electric

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current can be sent, they may be slaughtered wholesale.


When we get an electric dynamo, and find out what the note is, we intend to kill them.

I could write more about the mosquito, but, to be candid, he is not worth it.

XXV

DOMINION DAY

"Never was such a motley crowd;
Never was such a merry throng,
Never was laughter so long and loud
Never so merry the jest and song."

T was really the opening of the new race track we celebrated, and not Confederation.

From the "Grand" stand the scene was a motley one, but by no means unpicturesque. It presented a queer mix-up of homesteaders "spruced up" in their best things, lumber-jacks with river boots and gay sashes, English "chappies" in riding leggings and peaked caps, theological students from the East who have come up for the holidays to take our spiritual pulse, long-haired Indians, Dukhobors with flounced jackets and wide-seated trousers, bank-clerks, book-keepers, and doctors in duck trousers and Panama hats. The Reeve had neither coat nor collar. Our provincial M.P. wore a bland smile and a long-tailed coat. Do not misunderstand me; these were not his sole articles of

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attire. They were what "edited" the costume.

Bulldogs, "yaller" dogs, mangy wolf-hounds, and setters—those aristocrats of our canine kingdom—helped to make things lively.

Considering the extreme youth of the community, the horses, on the whole, did not make a bad showing.

An old, thoroughbred Kentucky mare, that looked for all the world like a lean greyhound, took the running race.

The horse that won in the "14½ hands and under" class was a veritable volume of the poetry of motion—bound in satin.

One is not long in Manitoba till one learns that the great sport of the country is horse-racing. And why not? It is the finest sport in the world. For real ecstatic, nerve-thrilling delight, there is nothing comparable with it except the landing of a hard-fighting, audacious trout.

Then, all well-informed people know that the horse has a soul. Our forbears realised it was more than a beast, for the centaurs of olden times were represented as part man and part horse.

The sports included a slow bicycle race, jumping, a tug-of-war, a baseball match, and some "dashes."

In one of the latter an Indian youth won easily, actually stopping in the race to pull off his socks. I had seen him win

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a race when he was a mere lad attending the Waushakada Indian School, at Elkhorn.

It is a good thing to foster the love of sport in the redskins, for an Indian who can run up against a white rival on the field and hold his own will be all the better for it when he comes to face him as a competitor in the sterner affairs of life.

In the West every child in the community is taken to the show. They trample over you, fall over you, smear your clothes, set off fire-crackers, throw pop-corn, and make themselves generally obnoxious. One longs for the Wantley dragon whose dessert was :

“Poor children three,
That could not with him grapple,
But at one snap he ate them up,
As one would eat an apple.”


A dance and supper ended the day, the children falling asleep to “Sashaz all,” “Swing yer saw-logs,” “Fling your lady apposyte,” and “All promenade.”

XXVI

“IN THE GLORY OF THE LILIES”

“Then came hot July boyling like to fire
That all his garments he had cast away.”

THE FAERIE QUEENE.

HE whole land is a paradise of blossoms—a very garden of the Lord. How unfortunate one is to live in the older provinces! Existence there is only canned life. We of the West belong to “the few elect.” Owen Wister is right: the East is the head of the country (perhaps), and the West is its heart.

There is a peculiar crispness in the air that the hottest sun cannot dissipate. The climate is like wine, without its headache. Ah! I am a drunken tippler.

“I taste a liquor never brewed
In vats upon the Rhine;
No tankard ever held a draught
Of alcohol like mine.

“Inebriate of air am I
And debauchée of dew,
Reeling through endless summer days
From inns of molten blue.”

When I go out I always take a book, but I never read it. Schopenhauer has

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said it is a sin against the Holy Ghost to frighten away one's original thoughts by taking up a book, so I tuck it in my blouse front, as I walk through this Milky Way of flowers. The air is heavy with the honeyed odour of the wood anemone. Let me pluck a bloom. For so white a blossom it has a suspicious number of *aliases*: the Wind-flower, Cow Bell, Herb Trinity, and Pasque Flower.

This little plant with the inconspicuous flower is False Solomon's Seal, or Wild Spikenard. I heard it called Solomon's Zigzag the other day. Its botanical name is a fearsome one to pronounce—*Polygonatum biflorum*.

Probably the plant is named thus because the stem rises from a jointed root-stock. When this stem withers, it leaves a round scar on the root that is said to resemble Solomon's Seal. The number of seals indicate the years of the plant. It belongs to the lily family. The flowers grow in a white raceme. Last autumn I gathered their berries; they were red, speckled with purple.

There are still wild cherry blossoms. The flowers are very beautiful in shape, much like those of the hawthorn. Their colour is a rich, creamy white with delicate reddish anthers. “Angel's clothing” is what I mentally catalogue them.

The flowers on the cranberry tree are

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white, too. The tree is a fountain of bloom. The Snowball or Guelder Rose is a cultivated species of this shrub, with all the flowers become neutral.

From the Milky Way I emerge into a vetch tangle. The real-estate agents say that a growth of vetch indicates good ground. I have seen scientists making experiments with it at the Agricultural College at Guelph, so that its value as a cover-crop, or substitute for manure, might be accurately estimated.

This is the plant referred to in the Bible as the "tares" that the enemy sowed in the field by night. It is really a wild pea. For such an assertive, gadding plant, the flowers of the vetch are extremely modest. They have been called "Old Maids' Bonnets," but they look for all the world like little butterflies that are sleeping after a long caper in the sun.

The red lilies never look so well as when they have their feet amid the vetch. They are passionate bacchantes—loving, lissom, languorous.

A reproach to the lily, you say?

No, madam! Passion is not a blush word. And a woman without passion is only a doll—a bran-stuffed, wax affair that squeaks, shuts its eyes, and moves its arms when this spring is pressed or that string pulled. She never amounted to

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anything nor ever will. Her virtue is “the virtue of the zoophyte.” The lily bloom is but a bright anticipation—an expression of hope. It has but one mission. All its beauty of form and hue are but means towards the consummation of the eternal edict of creation—“Increase and multiply.”

Browning once compared a red lily to “a thin clear bubble of blood.” Hillis says they are “chalice cups,” perfect as no Sèvres vase.

There are other flaunting blooms among the tares. Here, beside me, is the fire-weed. Its flower is an airy appendage like carded silk, and floats from a calyx of rich maroon. It is a pity to call it a weed. I tell the people hereabout that its proper name is Godiva's Hair. If I can persuade them to believe me, it will have a new name—at least, locally.

The *Castillo* is a hot-hued flower. The whites call it “Indian's Paint Brush,” but the Indians call it “Bloody Nose.” It is hardly a flower, yet more than a leaf. It is a mop of leaves, half-red and half-green, breaking into flame at the tips.

The roses are not confined to my vetch tangle. I gather them by the double armful. There are “roses, roses all the way.”

The ancients deemed the rose one of

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the four "cordial flowers" for cheering spirits, the others being violet, alkanet, and blue-flowering borage.

The marriage of the spiritual and physical is consummated in the rose. There is something of heaven, something of earth in it. As I pluck a ruddy-hearted bloom, viperine thorns sting my flesh. Ah! one forgets hell at times.

The blue-eyed grass has danced across the meadow-land. It looks like ordinary grass that has got tired of being trodden under foot or eaten up as fodder, and has grown a dainty flower of ultramarine blue.

I tried to find its classification in old Gray, but failed. This was only natural as it is not a grass at all, but belongs to the lily family. It is a cousin of the stately fleur-de-lis.

The forget-me-nots contest the ground with it. I like their ancient name best—"Our Lady's Eyes."

"Doubtless," says Izaak Walton, "God might have made a better berry than the strawberry, but doubtless God never did." Fresh picked off the moist loam, their flavour is indescribable. One thinks of the words luscious, uncloying, ambrosial, and discards each in turn.

So blissful is the sensation I derive from tasting them that I feel almost wicked. I would like to thank some one

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for them, and am reminded of a British traveller in France, who, waking in his green bed in the open air, left coins on the wayside for the hospitality he had received in the great hostelry of Nature.

In the wood-ways a little mauve-coloured orchid is to be found. It is very dainty. The gay moccasin flower is also in bloom. The little red spots on the golden shoes, “these be rubies—fairy favours.” I do not pluck the orchids, because of their rarity.

The swampy ground is fern-planted. The ferns are said to belong to the oldest race of vegetation, and were probably the first plants in the soil that was cast up by the primeval waters. If not “the fittest,” they are most assuredly the most persistent of all types.

The wild currant or *Ribes* are well formed. There will be a “good few” this year. Soon I shall gather them to “jell.” With wild duck, moose, or roast mutton, the flavour is ravishing.

The wild cotton which grows in the swale grass, with root-stacks deep in the mud, is too delicate to stand plucking. It loses its head straightway. Its snowy tassels tempt you into the bog. A solid bit of turf near the edge looks substantial.



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You step out on it, only to find it deception and lies. It is a bottomless pit.

The ponds and sleugh waters are shingled with yellow lilies. They shine as golden lamps in a night of green. Harriet Prescott says some souls are like water lilies—fixed yet floating. I am wondering what souls she meant—married flirts, I suppose.

The wind is bringing acres upon acres of perfume from the meadows where the men are mowing. No one has ever invented anything like the smell of new-mown hay. It is the "smell of the field which the Lord hath loved."

XXVII

FLOWER AND WEED

"In the holy wars that have no truce
Twixt seed and harvest tide."

MY garden belts the house. The lawn is unbroken, for I am of Bacon's thinking—"Nothing is more pleasant to the eye than greene grasses kept finely shorn."

It is an old saying that more springs in the garden than the gardener sowed. I find this eminently true of my flower row.

A woman should never attempt to weed. She is not made that way.

Pray consider my difficulties! If I stoop, every drop of blood in my body falls to my head and I thus court death from apoplexy, hæmorrhage, congestion, or a multiplicity of nameless ills. True, this is only a contingency; but as an actual happening, I always break the steels in my stays, and often the laces.

If I get on my knees I soil my skirt, and our village Celestial will charge me \$1.25 to starch it again. Besides, this attitude has a disastrous effect on my shoes. It

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wrinkles them across the toes. To weed with anything like comfort, one must squat after the manner of the monkey eating pea-nuts. I would prefer to let the weeds grow.

Men should be forced to weed the flowers. Women are only meant to wear them. Nature made men ugly of a purpose that they might "grub" in the dirt and "crick" their backs. But,

"All men are idlers,
Such is my simple creed ;
So I must go and weed
Hard in my garden."

Of all the flowers in my "garden's sacred round," there is none I like so well as "maiden pinks of odour faint." They have not, however, grown well. I am thinking of applying to Mr. H. G. Wells, the novelist, for some "food of the gods," which has the property of making anything with life, animal or vegetable, grow abnormally.

"In all the vegetable kingdom," said an American essayist, "I know of no quality better than this, growth—nor any quality that will atone for its absence."

My nasturtiums are not thriving either. This is probably because I eat the choicest of them. They are sprawling, chintz-faced things, anyway.

None of the flowers are so well named as the pansy, or *pensée*. He is a leering,

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grotesque little elf. He winks his yellow eye at me, for, like the Witch of Endor, he has a familiar spirit. I confess, with shame and confusion of face, that I stand there and, in return, make *risqué* mouths at these unholy little scarecrows.

I shall remember next year not to plant my poppies beside the nasturtiums. The result is not artistic. Charles Dudley Warner is right ; women always did, from the first, make a mess in a garden.

The poppy has been vilified because, forsooth, Poe, Coleridge, De Quincey, and, perhaps, Shelley and Byron, sipped her blood till sanity grew dim. She has been called bad, bitter, baneful, the ally of everlasting night. Ah ! but I love her impetuous scarlets, her radiant yellows, and imperious purples.

She is the beneficent fairy that has soothed the hurt of a world. When sleep, that will-o'-the-wisp, has fled the pillow of pain, she comes to the relief. She slows the living engine, cools the flaming wheels, and banks up the fires so that the flow of force is only passive. Thus she proves herself a defender of vitality, a repairer of waste, and a balm for hurt minds. Good Princess Poppy !

This is sweet-pea tide. The Padre has been helping me string my vines. In a somewhat offensive way, he remarks that the success of gardening is more dependent

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on the character of the gardener than on the character of the soil or seeds.

He tied the vines very badly. They look as if their necks were stretched, and the string is painfully in evidence. The Padre's intentions are always admirable, but his capabilities are limited. Yet, with all his faults—and their name is legion—I love him still.

But about the sweet-peas. They are ubiquitous in Manitoba. In Ontario they are a fancy—here a habit. What the broom plant is to Victoria, the pea is to Winnipeg. It is a generous plant. It is like the widow's cruse of oil: the more you use, the more it increases. It is a favourite, too, with children. Others have noticed this. Listen:

“ Oh, what has been born in the night,
To bask in the blithe summer-morn?
She peers in a dream of delight
For something new-made or new-born.

“ Not spider-webs under the tree
Nor swifts in their cradle of mud,
But ‘ Oh, father, sweet Mrs. Pea
Has two little babies in bud.’ ”

The wild flowers in my garden are bunched together without order. I have Mariposa lilies, meadow-sweet, morning-glories, harebells, and foxgloves. The hollyhocks are prim, stiff old maids, and “ wallflowers ” at that.

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It is a terrible alternative that a woman must either marry or remain an old maid. The *Zend Avesta*, as translated by Anquetil Duperron, contains somewhere this awful denunciation : “ That damsel who, having reached the age of eighteen, shall refuse to marry must remain in hell till the resurrection.” Ah ! hapless Miss Hollyhock !

XXVIII

DUE WEST

"David went out to look for donkeys, and by God he found a kingdom."

—KIPLING.

WE are going to visit the Duk-hobor villages. It is a beautiful morning, brimful of liquid sunshine. Now and then vague, health-giving scents seem to rise up to us like genii from their earthen pot.

It is good to abandon ourselves to the keen delight of swift motion, bounding blood, and glad elasticity of spirit. With the poet, more than ever, we doubt if town dwellers have souls to be saved.

Our path lies through fields crowned with "the joy of harvest." I delight greatly in these moving tablelands of grain, with their soft sibilant swish that is like the sound of the sea. It is not strange that of all plants wheat is the favourite with the poets.

It has been said that if imperial Rome could have grown sufficient wheat in Italy to feed her legions, she would still be mistress of the world. But her glory

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has vanished, and the rulers of the world are they who have the mastership of wheat. It is a big bid Canada is making.

The trail runs through fields aflame with golden-red asters, "Black-eyed Susans," wolf-berry, and big, white convolvuli that stare at us with wonder-wide eyes. We pass through whole acres of wild mint which waft great clouds of perfume into our faces.

The sunflowers grow in riotous fertility, and have a habit of massing themselves in brilliant patches.

In the afternoon, we stop at Goodman's store for tea. The Goodmans come from Kansas, and have a small boy all eyes and collar, named Dewey (pronounced Do-ee). Our hostess supplies us with tea, and bread and butter, to which we add cold chicken, radishes, and berries. The Winnipeg woman who is of our party is attracted by the queer outfits that drive up to the store; by the slow-going, immobile oxen; the witless, skittish broncos, but in particular by a span of broken-down jades with curved knees and large mild eyes. She asks their driver if they are "muskegs." He looks puzzled for a moment, and then, bursting into a loud guffaw, says:

"Lor', ma'am! I reckon ye mean mustangs."

After a short drive we pass the home

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of our member of Parliament, who, like Cincinnatus, resumes the plough when his political tasks are ended. Some of our party deem the two callings incompatible, but I stoutly contend that the pursuit of agriculture is a highly honourable one. Bancroft, in his history of the United States, says, "No occupation is nearer heaven." In ancient times it was the business and relaxation of kings. Liddell tells us that in the early days of Rome the work of the farmer was the only kind of manual labour deemed worthy a free citizen. Cicero, Cato, Virgil, Pliny, and Varro, the antiquarian, all pronounced encomiums on agriculture, showing that it possessed a strong and enduring charm for the Roman mind!

When we cross the borders into Assiniboia, the character of the land changes and spreads itself out into flat steppes. At sunset we shiver with the cold. "In the midst of summer prepare for winter" must be the motto of everyone who drives here.

Our horses follow the best-beaten trail, for there is not a light in any direction to guide us.

But there *are* lights, for occasionally a glow-worm wings over our path—"fairies' lamps," we call them.

As we cross Bear Creek, we espy a light in a window—two lights—several of them

Due West

—and presently we find ourselves in a low, whitewashed house of logs where the women are chattering like magpies, where we are trying to explain who is who's mother, in our party, and who owns each particular gentleman.



Our hostess does not bear the slightest resemblance to a Venus de Milo or Diana. She is deep-chested, iron-muscled, and thickset, like a man. Her legs are sun-browned, her feet splayed like the saints in stained-glass windows, and her flat, stolid face bears the imprint of monotony.

It would appear as if the females of all races who are subject to undue physical exercise lose early their picturesqueness, comeliness, and contours. They tend to become asexual and to conform to the physical standard of the males. As this woman leaned over the swinging cradle and nursed her baby, even her breasts appeared shrunken and flaccid.

For supper, Bill, our host, poured out a dish of green peas on the table. The Padre does not think "green stuff," as a sole food, is suitable for a baptized person. This is only another way of expressing Voltaire's sneer to the effect that Rousseau contemplated a general return of humanity to the quadruped state and a diet of lettuce and water. The Padre ought to

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be ashamed of himself, for the person who does not like freshly pulled, tender, green peas deserves to forfeit head, stomach, and electoral franchise.

Unfortunately we had found our way to one of the poorest of the Dukhobor homes. Our beds were awful. I use the word discreetly. The mattresses and rugs were malodorous beyond words. Thirteen souls slept in one apartment on wooden bunks. Perhaps I should use the word "bodies," as some of us there were who had lost our souls, for indisputably this is the land "where by day they track the ermine, and by night another vermin."

The bugs and fleas came down like wolves on the fold. Their most striking peculiarity was, as Mrs. Malaprop would say, "his numerousness." They swarmed in hundreds—yes, thousands—making night hideous. They honeycombed our flesh and drank our life-boold till we all looked as if we had virulent smallpox.

After falling over the stove and a bench of tin pans, I found it was raining outside, and was obliged to return—to scratch and pray.

The Padre, who was my "bunkie," bore his miseries unflinchingly. He scolded me, and said a woman who could not take things philosophically had better stay at home and sit in the parlour. I

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abused him so roundly that I lost all claims to Elysium on the spot. After all, Thoreau is right : the worst kind of a tick to get under your skin is yourself in an irritable mood.

We cooked our breakfast at streak of dawn, our hostess adding a plate of boiled potatoes to our fare of bacon, stewed tomatoes, and marmalade. The hospitality of the Dukhobors is usually without price, but Bill took what I proffered him, remarking in extenuation, and with a rising emphasis :

“ You rich ! rich ! Money in bank.”

It was a beautiful morning, and standing on the village eminence that overlooks the plains, the beauty of the scene amply repaid us for the pain of the night. Here one can look across wide-thrown, shadowless land, and “ babble of green fields ” that take in the whole gamut. I like the plains for the very reason that there are so few salient points in the picture. The “ values ” count. Every touch tells. One is not confused by a multiplicity of details, and so the scape appeals to the eye more effectively than a mountain scene.

Driving through them we are chartered by rows of sunflowers and hedges of prodigal poppies that divide the fields. The poppies grow high with large, double bloom, and in every conceivable colour.

We cross the Swan river on a stout,

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wooden bridge that is foreign and artistic in every line. Here, at the entrance to the flax fields, we meet the reapers driving to work. The women are knitting. All are singing. It may be that the effect of song, the clear sky, the pastoral setting, and the anodyne sweetness of nature, throw a glamour over these despised refugees from overseas, but, of a surety, they seem to have a saner, nobler, and more natural ideal of existence than their critics. These folk have stripped life of much artificiality and accumulated rubbish, and have learned to deal with the primal realities. They are, in truth, far removed from the stress, struggle, and nervousness of the great Anglo-Saxon idea.

I am doubtless stupid in that I fail to see just reason why attempts should be made to coerce this people into other modes of thinking and living. Why cannot we let them alone? They do not steal, swear, lie, or drink. They pay their debts, cultivate the land, and rear large families. There is no languorous, emasculated manhood among them; no mendicant or criminal poor.

If the Dukhobors do not want to occupy large tracts of land—"homesteads," or whatever else you may call them—why should they be made to take them at the point of the pitchfork? Pre-

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sently, other people will be glad to go in and possess the land.

The Dukhobors have the prescience and courage to break the conventions that stand in their way and to live as if literature did not exist. They believe many of the evils of "civilisation" have their root in the idea of property, and many great and wise men are thinking the same thing. One of these has said :

"The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, undertook to say, 'This is mine,' and found people foolish enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society."

The party are rallying me on my long face as we enter the second village.

Most of the houses are new here. Some of them have the lion and the unicorn carved at the apex of the roofs—not the Russian bear, kindly observe. The interiors are snowy white ; the windows swing on hinges ; the alcoves are filled with flowers. We admire the odd-shaped, hand-made jars, quaint pots of iron and brass, bizarre needlework, and vari-coloured dadoes. We purchase some home-made chairs that are quaintly devised, and wish we had a wagon to carry off the tables and cabinets. It is a distinct pleasure to look at these houses, and quite impossible to decide which one we would rather live in.

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There is that which is stately and dignified about the Dukhobor leave-taking. Always, as we make our adieux, every kerchiefed head bows profoundly and wishes us God's blessing. It may be no more sincere, but it is infinitely prettier, than the high hand-shake of our smart set.

The yards are, in most cases, divided by fences made of woven tamarack twigs, over and through which hops have been trained, their curling tendrils and airy pendent bunches making a most effective decoration.

Here we meet Mr. H. P. Archer, who is living among the Dukhobors, and is making his influence felt for good. Mr. Archer is an English Quaker, and seems to be a man of wide sympathies. Unfortunately he is sadly crippled. The people appear to have much respect and affection for him.

The Padre spoke to Nikolai, one of the Dukhobors, concerning the domestic relations of Peter Veregin. Nikolai replied with fervour :

“ Lie ! all big lie ! Him same as priest. Him no like women.”

Veregin has been anathematised as the very apogee of rascality. The majority of his own people are, however, fond of him, and a wise man has said that to be famous is to be slandered by people

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who do not know you. His critics say that Veregin is an all-puissant autocrat; that he is the incarnation of the nickel-in-the-slot machine; that he has an itching palm. Between Government agents, meddling outsiders, and Veregin himself, some few weak-kneed Dukhobors are in a muddle. They have yet to distinguish who is their friend—Codlin or Short.



Brushing these rumours aside, we must admit that Veregin is, in many respects, a capable man. He understands, too, this people—their character, habits, and idiosyncrasies. It is well to remember, at this time, Montaigne's famous query, "Shall we not dare to say of a thief that he has a handsome leg?" It is to be hoped our Government will be wise enough not to martyr Veregin and thus retard the progress of this community.

Veregin is anathematised because he has not introduced an educational system among his people. The Philadelphia Quakers have collected \$15,000, to "smart" them up, but Veregin has declined to accept the money. He is right. The offer was well-meant, but when the Dukhobors ask for education, the people of the Dominion are capable and ready to supply the necessary funds.

It may be, too, that Veregin finds an

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education has not been the best thing for himself. He may find the unlettered purer in motive and act. Who can say?

"We are all learned now," said a Frenchman, "and we have all ceased to be Christians."

Once these people become ambitious for letters, they will become corrupt, because ambition arises either from physical inertia or a desire for social distinction. With an untilled world lying at our feet, we need farmers more than philosophers—school-boards and the powers-that-be to the contrary.

Yes, there is a lot of unnecessary, and worse than useless, talk about the Dukhobors, whereas they have already reached a stage in their development where they can be safely trusted to work out their salvation without interference from trader, brewer, politician, or would-be philanthropist.

XXIX

A WESTERN HOMESTEAD

"Here in a large and sunlit land,
Where no wrong bites to the bone."

—KIPLING.



WE drove to Thunder Hill this afternoon — a distance of twenty miles. This abrupt tor can be seen from all parts of the valley. The imaginary line that divides Manitoba and Saskatchewan cuts directly through its heart. But quite apart from this fact, it is a noted eminence.

For a year this hill has waved me tempting invitations to speed thither and examine the complex greys, ambers, and raw cobalt that suffuse or blur its sharp outlines. To-day it is "the land of longings fulfilled." A geologist told me awhile ago that this tor is a remnant of the glacial period. Who knows? We may fag out our body and brain in the consideration of palæontology, geology, and mineralogy, and only come to the old and painful conclusion that "we are of yesterday and know nothing."

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There is a cottage nestling under the lee of the hill. Cow-byres and thatch-roofed stables cuddle down to it as chickens under the maternal wing, and a wave of yellow wheat spreads like a golden carpet around its base. Ah! 'tis, in truth, a sunny land.

The Padre and I have different tastes regarding hills. He likes to climb up and look down, whereas I like to lie down and look up. In this case we compromised by looking up. Besides, my appetite is on edge and our hostess is getting tea on the table. She is a bright woman, this farmeress. In spite of her isolated life, she is smartly gowned and her hair is neatly—even stylishly—dressed.

We play "Little Sally Waters" and "Button, Button," while the kettle is boiling. The children — child-fashion — want me to live here "all the times." Troth! but I like the sweet blarney of these little flatterers.

Two Barnardo boys look on and enjoy the sport; and presently we lure them into our noisy ring. They seemed afraid of "the quality" at first, but now they are confiding to me that Canada is "a jolly fine place." They get strawberry jam, eggs, chicken, and pie to eat, and can have as many slices of bread as they want.

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And I tell them that some day, if they are ordinarily good boys, they will have a farm like this and will bring boys from England themselves. And then they tell me secrets, and I tell them some. What are they? Never you mind! I couldn't possibly tell. Wild horses couldn't make me divulge them.

Poor lads! Their features indicate their birth and station to be of low origin. They are the world's brown bread, so to say; but, in this better land of Canada, they are looking out grandly into the future with unbounded faith. And fortunate, too, is their escape from the foul atmosphere of fetid slums and rotting tenements; or from a rural serfdom replete with much that is debilitating, debasing, and destructive of physique and intellect.

On Sundays, once a fortnight, these lads go to the school-house with "the marster and missus," where a service is held by a travelling missionary. A Sunday-school paper is given them to take home. It seems to me the possibilities of the school-house in the social life of the settlers are not utilised to their best advantage. There ought, assuredly, to be a small circulating library of well-selected books—chiefly fiction—in each school. I say "fiction" advisedly, for, if I lived here, I would prefer it myself

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because my life would have less colour, and I would want colour, and love, and laughter too, and those touches of imagination that annex fairyland to the solid earth.

I promised to ask the good Aberdeen Society to send them a package of magazines every month, and to have in it, for a surety, some nursery jingles and a song or two.

Our host is in high feather over his bumper crop. There never was such a crop—never; and I quite believe him. He will be able to fill a car this winter himself, and save the grain buyer's commission. He will be able, so he says, to get the house lathed and plastered; and madam—well, madam is going down to Winnipeg, and there will be wonderful shopping and goings-on. And I am buoyantly happy with them. Dear, oh dear! but a good harvest is heaven. Indeed, I am not sure that we would even consider so doubtful an exchange.

It is a blissful sensation that pervades the breast of one who, after hungering, has fed heartily. Under its spell, I wander out to the barnyard to take in the sights. The Padre says there are none, but I am more than ever convinced he has a dull soul.

Now to me there is nothing more absorbing in the world than a pen of

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little pigs, and the one I find here is no exception.

To most people the pig is an unsavoury animal, all nose and abdominal circumference. They only appreciate him in his ulterior form of smoked bacon. Indeed, in Quebec, to call a person *cochon* is to charge him with indecency. Personally, I find there is a charm about the pig neither easily described nor easily analysed.

Once I read to the Padre Charles Lamb's Essay on Roast Pig, but he had a poor opinion of it. He says the Chinese have a more direct and exemplary method of cooking pork. They burn the sty.

As I watch the ways of Madam Pig, with her litter of piglets—"a wreath of girls with brothers intertwined"—I am led to think there are really wonderful advantages in porcine being. A pig has a hide impervious to criticism. This is an advantage coveted by authors.

The pig knows nothing of the strenuous life. He has learned to "laze" unmoved. It was an old Indian who affirmed that, among white men, the hog was the only gentleman, for he never worked, fed upon the best corn, and at last grew so fat he could not walk.

The expression "fat as a pig" has become proverbial. As a general thing, we understand that the person to whom

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the epithet is applied is a lazy, lumpy bumpkin.

Charles Buxton says a nation does well to starve her men of genius. "Fatten them," he says, "and they are done for."

This is assuredly a mistake. Fatness is not an indication of laziness or mental dullness. Napoleon was plump as a partridge. Dr. Johnson was fat to clumsiness. Lablache was charged three fares when he travelled. Balzac was so portly that he had to be encircled with bandages when he walked. Would-be wits said it was a day's exercise to walk round him once. Rossini was so stout that for seven years he never saw his knees. Janin, the prince of critics, had chin and cheeks which protruded beyond his whiskers, and Daniel Lambert weighed 737 pounds and it required 112 feet of plank to make his coffin. It took twenty men three hours to get him into his grave.

And what would the world do without its jolly fatlings, or, for that matter, without its streaky bacon?

Although it is not generally acknowledged, obesity is a standard of beauty. What men call "a fine figure of a woman" nearly always means a woman fat as a corn-fed porker. Besides, does not the pig possess in perfection the *nez retroussé*, described by the poet as "tip-tilted like the petal of a flower"?

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It is the fashion for folk to speak of the pig as homely—even as ugly. But, even if we allow that the pig is not *entirely* a thing of beauty, “what,” we ask, “what is beauty?” Aye! there’s the rub. It is best to answer it as did the Chinaman who won the wisdom prize—“I do not know.” It is a case of every man to his taste. Ask the devil, said Voltaire, what is the meaning of the beautiful, and he will tell you a couple of horns, four claws, and a tail.

If the pig has claim to beauty he must claim it on the definition laid down by Pope :

“ ’Tis not a lip, or eye, we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all.”

But the pig need not worry over his plainness. Beauty is a doubtful gift. It has done more to disturb, tear up, disintegrate and destroy the nineteen Christian centuries than have the combined forces of plague, poverty, famine, fire, dynamite, water, war, and weather.

The pig has other manifest virtues. He is not fastidious. His appetite is generously uncritical. All is fish that comes to his net.

All ages have commended his tenacity of purpose, as the term “pig-headed” amply demonstrates, and it is a benighted, much-to-be-pitied child who has never

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heard the entrancing and highly edifying story of the pig who wouldn't go to market, to say nothing of the crafty little pig who sadly fooled Sir Wolf by "looping" the hill in a barrel.

"But he is a dirty beast," I hear you say. "He rolls in mud."

What of it? At a famous German Spa I rolled in a bath of mud myself. It was lovely. I mean the mud. It made me think of Lady Wortley Montagu's remark to a friend who thus reproached her :

"My dear, your hands are dirty."

"Oh," said Lady Mary, lightheartedly, "you should see my feet."

Of course, Lady Mary was a literary person, and the jolt is thus considerably eased.

Personally I think bathing in cold water is gambling for life with nature. It is simply soaking one's life away. Wine, tar, spruce, milk, or even mud, are infinitely preferable. An all-over wash once a week is sufficient for any ordinary woman.

How do I know? Never you mind how I know. I know all right.

"Well, but——"

Oh, do, for goodness' sake, let *me* say a word or two once in a while! I know because I——because I know. I don't wish to discuss the matter further.

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The pig, too, is not stand-offish. While he puts on "side," it is only in a literal way. From a metaphorical standpoint, he is a hail-fellow-well-met. Indeed, they have a proverb in France which says of a pair of friends that they are "sociable as pigs."

As far as I can judge, the pig has only one thorn in the flesh. He has no temptations, and so his life is a book without pictures; his existence is set to sad music.

Temptations are sweet things; not so wholesome as ideals, but sweeter. Whether I fall or not, like Luther, I like to be tempted to "sin boldly." It is the recrudescence of the old Eve; the response of womanhood to an emergency. It is so much easier to repent than prevent. And what are the use of temptations if we never fall? Just tell me that!

* * * * *

On the way home.

Black night! The rain is raining as if it hated everything—the earth, the wheat, the flowers, and the Padre and me particularly. A wicked, bitter wind gathers up her skirts for a rush through the top of the popples. A burnt tree falls almost across our trail. A snaky twist of lightning! A stinging lash of rain with a lacing of hail in it! I hide my face

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against the Padre's shoulder. I am a most penitent traveller. I cross my heart, and "say grace." Temptations are not sweet. I like duties best. I will be good always.

XXX

DRAMATIC EPISODES

"Our tragedies are almost as short lived as our comedies, and almost as amusing."

—SIR WILLIAM MAGNAY.

HE horses ran away at the farm to-day. There was no man at the stable, and I was unhitching.

It was the mare started it. She is a dangerous bundle of impulses, has a mouth of iron and the temper of a fiend; but words would fail to describe the infinite subtlety of her mind.

When she affects the appearance of pathetic, senile decay, with a bored, done-out air, I always know she is going to kick, bite, or run away. And she knows I am afraid of her, the witch!

She dragged the horse and surrey with her, the lines and one trace down. Over pails, troughs, and lumber the two wild things flew till they twisted around a tree, where they left the rig and harness in pieces.

The horse bolted around the granary

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and stood still ; but the mare took a series of flying leaps and headed for the woods.

On a stump, which I had mounted for discretionary reasons, I made my first stump speech. I called her an ill-regulated yahoo, a pig-headed popinjay, and a spider. The girls say I called her a devil too, but this is quite a mistake. Indeed, I am rather proud of how I bore myself in the crisis. This is why I tell the story.

Now, in this land the path of the transgressor is strewn with barbed wire, and so my mistress got entangled in some loose strands that had uncoiled from the fence.

“She’ll be cut to pieces”—“We’ll have to shoot her,” wailed the girls ; but, contrary to all expectations, the hussy stood stock-still and waited till I came up and freed her. She was not much hurt, and I led her as a lamb to the stable, where I tied her with two ropes, and—Here the curtain falls !

It was ignominious having to walk home, but we took our time and rested often by the way. We gathered a hatful of mushrooms, those toothsome “plants in masquerade,” which grow in great perfection in this valley. We feasted, too, on pulpy, subtle-flavoured saskatoon berries.

The boglands are dry, and Kit cut an

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armful of cat-tails. She has been reading botany of late, and insists on our calling them "reed maces." I like to pull their heads apart to wonder how tightly Nature has packed in the seed-vessels.

Thoreau declares that in the cat-tail Nature plays a conjurer's trick which is equal to taking out of a hat feathers enough to fill a bed.

Labrador tea, which belongs to the heath family, grows along the road. In the spring this plant throws out a delicate white blossom. Its green, leathery leaves are heavily lined with a rust-coloured fur. It is said to be palatable as a tea, and was used for that purpose by pioneers, just as the early settlers in Ontario used "High Hyson," which was only a well-sounding name for hemlock needles.

In the southern provinces it is correct to speak of the "flying gold of October," but in the nor'lands the gold becomes brown. This is why I pluck a bit of belated golden-rod with especial pleasure.

Evelyn gathered some vetch peas to send home to Ontario, and recited for us this epitaph that figures on a tombstone in a Savannah graveyard!

"Here lies the body of Solomon Pease,
'Ncath the daisies and the trees,
Pease is not here, only the pod,
Pease shelled out and went home to God."

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There is an incident recorded in the Bible about the bears coming down from the woods and eating some boys who called "Bald head!" after a prophet. No one need doubt the story, for at the very instant we were impiously laughing at the fate of Pease, a huge bear with three cubs emerged from the brush within a few yards of us. We did not wait to take snap-shots, or any kind of shots, but flew for our lives, leaving a long trail of cat-tails, golden-rod, peas, snakeroot, and mushrooms in our wake. We stopped running at the first farm-house, where we caught our breath and, incidentally, drank unlimited quantities of buttermilk.

The farmer lost a horse to-day. This is the second this season. He attributes their death to sleugh-hay. Perhaps his wife came nearer the mark when she said :

"Pshaw! them broncos ain't no good, anyhow. Work jest breaks their hearts."

The farmer is moving his stable because the manure pile is so high the horses can no longer get in without scraping the skin off their backs. He says it takes less time to move the stable than the pile, and none of the farmers hereabout have yet dreamed of putting manure on the land. They are not *growing* wheat; they are mining it. They are using the accumulated fertility of centuries and making

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no return. But Nature keeps strict tally with them, and their draft will, sooner or later, be dishonoured and their future prosperity discounted.

The grain on this farm is still in the fields. It will be threshed from the stook. In Ontario, left so late, it would sprout. Here it is snowed and rained on, but without apparent injury. Indeed, the farmers say it is necessary to leave the grain out that it may dry well before being stored in the granaries.

But it does not do to quote Eastern methods to a Manitoban. For some reason it offends him. Once I heard a farmer say the difference between the East and West was this: In the East it is a question of "Who's who?" and in the West it is "What's what?"

The farmeress (if I may be permitted to add a new word to our vocabulary) was uprooting her garden flowers and throwing them away. It seems heartless to destroy a plant you have loved and which has given you itself in sweetness. But it is the same with all love. There is nothing sure about it, except its uncertainty. To love and then to forget is the everyday comedy of the world. It is a wholesome example when the comedy turns to tragedy, as it did in the case of Swift. His biographer says of him: "He requited them"—his sweethearts—

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“bitterly, for he seems to have broken the heart of one and worn out that of the other, and he had his reward, for he died a solitary idiot in the hands of servants.”

* * * * *

When I told our stableman about our runaway, he did not speak. He only smiled and looked knowing.


It is the meanest thing a mean man can do.

XXXI

FACTS AND REFLECTIONS

"And because we know we have breath in our mouth,
and think we have thought in our head,
We shall assume that we are alive, whereas we are
really dead."

"**I**N November," says an essayist, "a
man will eat his heart if in any
month."

 I think of this as I tramp
along the river trail. An icy
mask is creeping over the
water so that it flows slug-
gishly, like white oil. The flowers and
grasses are dead, but still unburied. The
frozen berries make dull splashes of colour,
and one remembers Enid in her gown of
faded silk. Life is becoming a warfare,
especially to the householder. The shack-
dwellers are piling up clay and manure
where the cold creeps in. It will be only
an indulgence of Providence if all these
scantily sheltered people do not perish
from cold these winter months.

A sharp wind at the river bend makes
me bury my head deeper in my collar, but
presently the cold seems to bite bone deep.
I take a smart run, and the effort brings

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its reward. The game is worth the candle. Soon the blood is a-tingle to my fingertips. A heady joy is the rapture of the strong !

I overtake "Dirty" Dodson and his yoke of oxen. Dirty earns his title from the fact that he is the least-washed man in the West. It is a pity, too, when the river is so convenient. His skin is hide ; his hair is shag ; his frame a husk ; and he has a kind of instinct that supplies the place of mind. There are people who can best be described by negations. Dirty is one of them.

With much emphasis and many flowers of Western speech, he tells me how the judge "done" him last week in his case against the village veterinary surgeon, who, Dirty contends, sold him a dying horse.

He relates the story after the fashion of the oft-told nursery tale that finds such rapid *dénouement* when "the cat began to eat the rat." Dirty, it appears, swore in court that the veterinary was "no 'tarnel use in the world," and that he (Dirty) knew ten times as much about a horse.

The judge in giving decision said his sympathies at first were entirely with Dirty, thinking his knowledge regarding horse-flesh to be limited in comparison with that of the veterinary, but since

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Dirty had sworn that such was far from being the case, he had no alternative but to find in favour of the defendant.

The stupidity of such a judgment is quite beyond the comprehension of Dirty.

He inquires if I have observed his new trousers. He filled in a baby's grave last week, and "the corpse's father" gave him a dollar. The price of the trousers was \$1.50, but he got them fifty cents cheaper by purchasing on a Monday morning at the Jew's shop, for he tells me a Jew believes that if he fails to sell a pair of trousers on Monday morning, he will have bad luck all the week.

Indeed, Dirty talked a good deal of luck, his own experience being generally of the variety termed "hard." I try to explain how the calculus of probabilities has destroyed the Fates, and that there is no inscrutable fatality coercing his history. His so-called "luck" is only the unexpected result of certain causes and events. He understands better when I tell him that if he put twenty grains of wheat and twenty of oats into a cup and shake them up, the probabilities are that he will draw exactly half of each.

He says his hardest luck is with his wife, and seems comforted when I assure him that such is the usual experience of married men.

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His wife lives in Ontario with his nine children. She threw him out one night—his boots after him. He would marry a squaw if he were not afraid of the law. He is quite sure, though, that if he got half an hour's start of the constable he could get away.

On the walk home I have company, too. Anton, a Dukhobor whom I know, is facing villageward. He sold me thirty pairs of chickens this autumn for fifteen cents a pair. The Dukhobors, while they eat eggs, will not eat flesh, so as winter approaches they sell their fowls at a nominal price.

Anton, slovenly and ramshackle in appearance, belongs unmistakably to the great throng of common men with bended backs and work-hardened hands. He was exiled to Siberia by the Russian government, and, likely as not, got his painful stoop while working in the chain-gang.

He is complaining that if the Dukhobors buy tea or sugar the grocer weighs the paper with it, but will not do so when he buys ginseng from the Dukhobor.

The ginseng is a real El Dorado of treasure to the Dukhobors, and it ought to be celebrated in poetry. It is vastly superior to the shamrock and English rose, in that it pays the taxes and buys

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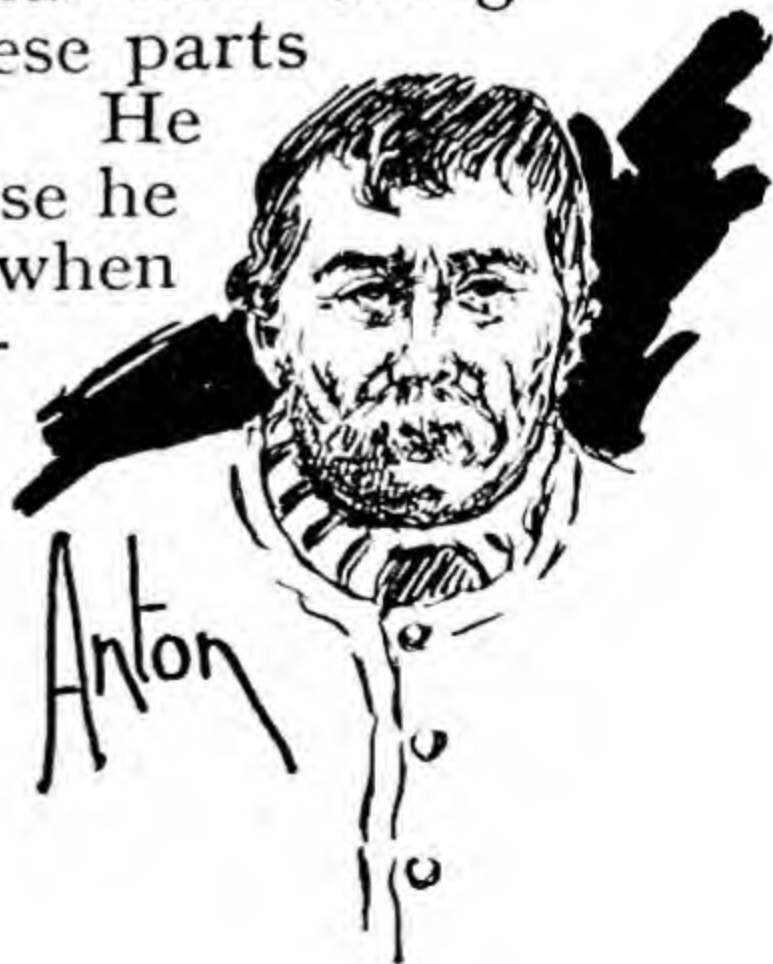
the machinery for its admirers. Sometimes it is called the ground-nut, and it is, I am told, cousin to the sarsaparilla family.

Thousands of pounds of ginseng are exported every year to China, where the people regard it as an elixir of life, but Western physicians do not find any basis for attributing special virtues to it.

The name is a corruption of the Chinese *Jin-chen*, meaning man-like, for the branching roots are said to resemble the human form. This is probably the reason they expect it to cure all the diseases to which man's body is subject.

Our conversation about the merchant and the ginseng has an abrupt termination, for, to the right of us, a badger skirts the trail and heads to the river. It is the first I have seen in the valley, for badgers are nocturnal in habit. He looks like a bear cub as he shambles along. A common expression in these parts is "dirty as a badger." He possibly bears the title because he is an excavator. His pelt, when dyed, is made into gauntlets of the cheaper kind.

As the darkness creeps on I find myself mentally repeating Browning's description of the pictures of Andrea del Sarto: "A com-



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mon greyness silvers everything—all in a twilight.”

* * * * *

After a sharp walk and a good dinner, it is well nigh Nirvana to stretch oneself on a rug near the fire and feel the sensation of softness as when caressed by sunlight—to feel it pervading the body even to the palms of the hands. One's senses become lulled to everything save bliss, for the clank and clamour of life have tiptoed from the room leaving you——

“I wasn't asleep. No, sir! you cannot make me believe any such thing. I heard every word you said.”

Ah! they are good, these long winter evenings. In them one may “pluck the nut of the world and crack it.” In the corner over there stands a pile of the newest books from Messieurs the Publishers. Presently I shall cut the string and disclose them.

There is a barrel of apples behind that door. Yes, lift the curtain! You see we have no cellar for them.

Good apples? Try them! Red-skinned, white-fleshed, sweet-blooded, of distracting odour! I once heard of a man who tested an apple thus: “Can I bite it? Can I put it in my pocket? Will it lie clasped in the palm of Eve's hand?”

It is odd that old Mandeville speaks of bananas as apples. He calls them “Apples

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of Paradise ” and describes them as, “ long apples, . . . very sweet, and of good savour. And though you cut them in ever so many slices or parts, across or endwise, you will always find in the middle the figure of the holy cross.”

XXXII

THROUGH COVER



HE wolves are the oldest homesteaders here in the West, but their claims are daily being cancelled by the hunters.

The Padre and I went hunting to-day for wolves, but were unsuccessful. We followed two in to the woods, but they evaded us.

In spite of its being a reversal of lycanthropic belief, I am beginning to think there is something in the legend of the werewolf, who, when harried by hunters, could transform himself into a man and, hunting his pursuers, throw them off the scent.

Speaking of the shrewdness of animals, a recent novelist has declared that the animals have invented everything except postage stamps, the protective tariff system, and marriage complexities. He is quite sure no beast ever exercised his conscience over marriage with a deceased wife's sister.

In this forest you feel as though you were walking around fiction-land. Ger-

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many has her Black Forest, full of shade and mystery, but, in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, our forests are white. This forest is one of the largest in the world, stretching out on all sides for hundreds of miles. With an exceptional spruce "bunch," all the trees are white.

Under a blue moon, and against the unsullied snow, they are semi-spectral and wraithlike. In the sunlight the trees are milk-white women decked with bits of glitter.

The Padre contends that the West is called "woolly" because of our storms, and urges, in defence of his opinion, that in Alaska the winds are called "woollies."

His contention is probably right as far as it goes, but it stops short — at least, so I argue.

The winds are called "woollies" because they bring snow. The West is woolly—that is, snowy. Does not someone in the Bible say, "God giveth *snow like wool*"?

This *must* be the better conclusion, because the Padre is sarcastic about it, and says I only know enough Scripture to be troublesome.

While we were arguing about the storms, the Padre said something under his breath that startled me, and, before I realised what had happened, he had discharged his rifle at what appeared to be a thicket of trees. There was a mighty

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crackling, and, in a moment or two, silence. It was a moose.

Plunging through deep snow, we came up to where it lay dead. The bullet had penetrated its lungs, going in at one side and coming out at the other. The animal had run fully three hundred yards, taking mighty leaps and spraying the boles of the trees with blood twenty feet from the ground. It was a sickening sight, and I turned away while the Padre examined his game. He will send for it to-morrow.

On the way home the Padre shot a fox—that is, he says, he “committed vulpicide.” Master Reynard was carrying a field-mouse home to his vixen partner when the bullet found him.

I never see a dead fox but I have an uncomfortable recollection of John Burroughs’ condemnation of the cruel sport of fox-hunting.

“A red-faced English squire galloping after a fox,” he said, “that, to my mind, makes neither an edifying nor a pleasant picture. A red-faced squire chasing a fox. The unspeakable in pursuit of the uneatable.”

They say the fox of this country, while quite as lean and hungry as his brethren in the south, is not so wily where a trap is concerned, and trappers make a big toll of pelts.

I notice that the Padre is getting con-

Through Cover

ceited in the extreme about his prowess as a hunter. This probably because he killed his first bear last week. With Walter Barrie, his guide, he was ranging timber up north. They built a lean-to of boughs (with nothing to lean to), and stored therein food, cooking utensils, and blankets. Sister bear called while they were out, and devoured nearly all their provisions. Her aldermanic appetite even permitted her chewing a square of tarpaper.

The next day, while the Padre was eating his "three B's"—bacon, beans, and bannock—Madam Bear put in a second appearance, and began to make a wide circle of the lean-to. The Padre threw a piece of bacon on the smouldering coals. The odour was distracting, alluring, irresistible, and so madam made two more circles, closing in on the Padre, closer each time till she got within easy range.

Then the Padre's bullet broke her spine. She went down on all fours, but in her death agony tore a young spruce tree in splinters. It took a second bullet to finish her.


Her pelt measured $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length. Her head was placed in a tree to dry, but the next morning, when the coast was clear, her cubs climbed up and ate it.

XXXIII

GRIMALKIN

"Because God made you and gave you eyes and a heart."

—RUSKIN.

 AM weather-bound, for it is a martial-spirited night and there is every scourge of wind and snow in the air.

The cats have come indoors, and are sharing the warmth of the fire with me.

Dobra Koshka (Russian for "good kitten") was the last to get in. She mounted the window-sill, and craved admittance by a series of sharp wails. She has a gamut of the most surprising howls at her command—a remarkable compass of sounds that are heavenly only in the sense that they are unearthly.

At present, she is "washing" herself. It is an idea of my own that this process is not the cat's particular method of cleaning herself, because a strong cat brushes more than a weak. The cat is highly charged with magnetism, and the brushing, it is very probable, completes an electric circuit and generates

Grimalkin

a heat or some pleasing sensation in the fur.

Happy Dobra! Her combs and brushes are attached to her feet. I try to draw a picture of her on the margin of my book, but it is not successful, for all her lines are circular. Her ears might appear angular to the casual observer, but, in reality, they are only curves.

It is difficult, too, to execute a picture of a cat when she persists in climbing up to nose you. I will let her snuggle down on my lap while I fall into feline musings.

It pleases me that Dobra is affectionate. It flatters my vanity, for Mr. Wain, the cat's particular artist, has given it as his opinion that cats are simply receptive creatures and exhibit the most striking characteristics of their mistress. The cats will be sulky, vindictive, suspicious, quarrelsome, or affectionate, according to their environment.

God made the cat, said a latter-day writer, that man might have the pleasure of caressing the tiger. Be that as it may, few animals have been more highly honoured or loved.

Beside the Nile, grimalkin reached his apotheosis, for he was worshipped while alive and mummified in his death. In the British Museum these mummified cats hold as honoured a place as the Egyptian

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kings, the Codex Alexandrinus, or the Rosetta Stone.

Among cat lovers of the past, some of the most noted are Montaigne, Dante, Gray, Hodge, the lexicographer, Richelieu, Pope Gregory, Gautier, Wordsworth, and Colbert.

It is true that quite as many noteworthy people have thrown boot-jacks and invectives at puss, and, according to Shaler, it is the only animal that has been tolerated, and even worshipped, without having one distinctively valuable quality.

"It is," he says, "in a small way serviceable in keeping down the excessive development of small rodents, which from the beginning have been the self-invited guests of man. As it is in a certain way sympathetic, and by its caresses appears to indicate affection, it has awakened a measure of sympathy it hardly deserves. I have been unable to find any authentic instances which go to show the evidence in cats of any real love to their masters."

Once I saw an old cat fly in the face of a woman, tearing her flesh with its claws, because the child on her lap was screaming violently. This, it seemed to me, was an "authentic instance" of "real love" for the child.

And, when you come to think of it, the cat deserves to live, because in spite

Grimalkin

of scalding-water, poison, tin cans, and shot guns, she has demonstrated her fitness by surviving.

A lady of Kingston, Ontario, told me that because her cat was old and painfully decrepit, she gave orders to have it poisoned by strychnine. This was done, and the cat was buried in the back garden. Next morning puss caused something like consternation by walking into the dining-room while family prayers were being said. A council was held, and it was decided that the cat had earned her right to live. Later, she became fat, sleek, and playful. The strychnine acted as a tonic.

XXXIV

"AN EXILE FROM HOME"

"Oh to be there, to break from the West,
To fling myself on the old home's breast,
Way down in old Ontario.
Where my heart just longs to be."



THE household has been sleeping for hours, but I look off across the moonlit snow-wastes to the south. The Indians say heaven is in the south.

I hate the snow to-night.
I agree with Charles Lamb:
snow glares too much for an innocent colour.

All the world seems to have come to a full stop. The heart of Nature is frozen and dead. Ah! of a surety, winter is "the clumsy blunder of a circle."

Now and then the wolves cry like souls in purgatory. I think they are reincarnations of the dead Indians, come to reproach the palefaces. Perhaps Louis Riel, the ill-starred half-blood, is among them. Once I picked bright blooms from his grave. It is placed near a great cross that bears a prisoned figure of the Nazarene with pierced hands and thorn-stung

“An Exile from Home”

brow. Riel's body lies there, but mayhap, throughout all the years, his soul, with the souls of his dusky braves, goes ever marching on.

The village is so lonely to-night that I feel the full realism of Wordsworth's exclamation, “O God! the very houses seem asleep.” I have dropped into a pit of silence, and hear only the far-off call of the city.

I long for the “sweet security of streets,” for the swaying, surging tangle, with the one-idea fervour of a sick woman. I am lonely for the pushing crowds, the call of the latest editions, the velvety sweep of feet, the whir of the automobile, the glare of the stage, the long rows of houses, and all else that once I hated.

One solitary light pulsates in the distance like a wounded heart. It comes from the little Victorian Order hospital on the hill.

In the south I had come to know the lights so well that they talked to me. Across the murky belt of Lake Ontario, on a wide-lying island, there strings a belt of lights like fallen stars. The electric lights are silver-blue. The gas is yellow. I like it better. Its light does not outrun its heat. The home lights are red. I like these best. “Shine softly, Kerosena!” apostrophises Hamilton, “next of

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kin to the sun, true monarch of mundane lights."

To my southern watchtower, the lighthouse sent me a fine, straight ray through the velvety blackness. The church lights I knew, because they were Gothic shaped. They were from "God's lighthouse."

Low down at the park entrance, the lamps hung like clusters of yellow grapes, and beyond, two coloured lights burned like the eyes of a savage beast, and figures passed and repassed through the patches of light. How can one know or love the lights in this far northland when the nearest is so remote that its light would take $3\frac{1}{2}$ years to reach us travelling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second? If that star yonder in the west, with its steady, piercing fire, were to be extinguished to-night, we would not find it out for forty-two months. So say the wise people who know about these things.

When an astronomer would measure between these stars, which to all appearances are a sociable family group, he must employ for his foot-rule a line a hundred million miles long.

Once Hume tried to be friendly with the stars. On descending the stairs he declined a candle, saying the starlight was clear enough, and, as he said it, he tumbled to the foot.

XXXV

SKATING V. WALKING

ALL the way down to the river we talked about skating. I told the girls how I learned on wooden skates with a metal keel. Later, I had a pair of a well-known make, fitted with levers that moved sideways and drove a clinch into my heel.

"Oh, yes!" I reply, in answer to their questions, "the skates stayed on quite ten minutes at a time."

"Why, mother," asks Kit, "how many years ago was that? *Won't* you enjoy my hockey skates? Just sit down here while I untie your moccasins."

It was good to sit on the bank and watch a wing-footed Mercury do all the digits on the ice, and the girl ricochetting across the open as if she had sails.

How foolish I have been to have lost all these years! I shall skate every day now.

It was Kit's fault. She should not have pushed me off like that. It led to a shameless display of *lingerie*. As she picked me up she said I looked 150 pounds foolish.

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The worst thing about skating is its distracting uncertainty. I am on my skates again. "I'm a-rolling through an unfriendly world." Seconds pass—horrible seconds—quite two seconds.

Surely, if I fall I shall break my back, perhaps my head. Then I'd have to wear plaster things and read tracts.

This is why I precipitate myself on a passing couple with no more pangs of conscience than if I had murdered them.

But the wine of action is in me. With a now-or-never desperation, I am off again. I have an awful foreboding. "The bird of time has but a little way to flutter—and the bird is on the wing."

Another sweep! God-a-mercy! How recklessly indiscreet is wo——

La Rochefoucauld was right. Other people's troubles have their piquancy. I knew it when all the skaters tried to help me up.

There is good ice on the river, but I do not find skating exhilarating. In the future I shall confine my exercise to walking and riding.

As I walk along the snow trails this afternoon, every teamster offers me "a lift." They look surprised when I say I am walking for exercise and pleasure.

"Where is your horses?" asked Timmons. (Timmons was loader in our camp last year.) When he hears they are in

Skating v. Walking

the stable, he says, "Well, b'gosh, but wimmen is queer folks!"

To serve the cause of good fellowship, I ride a little way behind his ox-team, admire their size and condition, and take notice of his new sleigh. He has been homesteading for three years, and this is his first sleigh. He intends paying for it with a couple of stacks of hay he has cured.

Again he interrogates me as to why I chose to walk when I could ride or drive. I try to tell him the good tidings of the breeze; of my vagabond taste for the "gay, fresh sentiment of the road"; that I have an eye for wide pictures; that the cold warms my heart and the walk rests my head; that I am a pantheist, and like to feel myself a part of the sky and trees and air.

Timmons looks at me sharply. He is not sure whether I am making fun of him or whether I have suddenly gone insane.

On my walk home, I pass three vehicles turning into the patch of un-stumped land which we use for a cemetery.

I always want to do something reverential when a funeral passes, but, being a Protestant, I dare not cross myself, and, being a woman, the procession would pass before I could find the pins to get my hat off.

XXXVI

A WESTERN "GENERAL"

"Oh, how full of briers is this working-day world."

JUST now I am struggling womanfully with an ignorant, wasteful, dish-breaking Swede. With the best possible intentions, she makes herself the least possible use.

I left her a recipe to-day that called for $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of pepper. She read it for 14.

The art of cookery is an insolvable mystery to her. That tea requires boiling water, and porridge frequent stirring, are facts far past her wit's end.

Like the sapient old king, she wonders how apples can get into dumplings.

Still, she is really thoughtful for our well-being. In proof of this, I might evidence a fact we only discovered last week. While she was out at prayer-meeting, we decided to have supper, but a diligent search failed to discover the bread.

She produced it when she got home. *It was in her bed.* She would not have us eat it frozen. No, indeed!

A Western "General"

The Padre assumes the painful look of an acute dyspeptic when he sees bread, and, like Stiggins, his "particular wanity" is soda-biscuits.

Anna is never impertinent. Her character might be summed up in the words "greasy, but amiable."

She wears a cap and apron, for, as yet, she has never heard the cry about "social ticketing."

She also wears a rag on nearly every finger, and, as she is bounteously blooded, a stain on every rag. She explains that her fingers meet with many "temptations." She doubtless means tribulations. The rags have "temptations," too. They are always "getting uncombed."

Quite half the time she is suffering from a pain. It is a movable affliction affecting every part of her body in turn, but, sometimes, several parts at once.

I assure her pain is a good thing. It is a proof she is alive. I always sympathise with her deeply, and give her medicine. She likes eating drugs; besides, we buy them wholesale.

She wanted the "lend" of my cape when she came. I gave it to her. Now she would like my coat, and seems aggrieved at my refusal.

When Anna breaks a dish, or rather when a dish Anna is handling breaks

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(an "automatic brake," so to say), she is, apparently, much perturbed. She carries the jagged pieces to me, thereby inflicting several new "temptations" on her fingers. She explains that the accident was the result of her hard heart. I have been trying to explain, of late, that such results not unfrequently spring from soft head.

Until recently Anna has been much in tears. She has been weeping copiously, and often suspiciously, near the stock-pot. She enjoys weeping. Weeping is to her what Shakespeare calls "a dear sorrow."

Be that as it may, Anna frequently sits her down in a heap of grief and dirty dishes to write me explanatory notes.

Sometimes she slips the notes to me as I pass by, sometimes I find them on my plate; but generally she leaves them on the hall table.

She would have me understand she is not "mad" at me—not a bit of it. It is her soul that concerns her. She has committed the unpardonable sin, and is quite sure she is lost.

Although I have questioned her closely, she is not quite clear as to what the sin is, but she heard a good deal about such a sin at some meetings she has been attending.

She has been going to church six times a week, I cut off three meetings, and have

A Western "General"

substituted a course of modern fiction—largely humorous. The results are clearly salutary, but in certain church circles it is whispered that I am a monster of wickedness and tyranny.

When the ladies of her church come to call on me, Anna shakes hands with them and apologises for her appearance. It seems it is customary at some of the societies for all the members to shake hands. Such being the case, it is only a logical outcome that Anna should be "friendly like" when occasion permits.

This is why I smile, and let them take their medicine.

XXXVII

HUSKIES

"I have cursed your breed for a lazy crowd,
I have beaten you black and blue,
And now with my face to the South, I'm proud
That I once owned mates like you."

FIVE dog trains arrived in the village to-day from Cumberland House. They were in charge of a strapping young Indian whose splendid masculinity was emphasised by his excessive boyishness. He spoke English perfectly, having been educated at a mission school—Emmanuel College, I believe.

He took me for a rattling, ringing ride on his toboggan, and, for the nonce, I abandoned myself completely to the pure joy of swift motion and bounding blood.

The huskies are half wolf. Their hair is thick and long, sometimes black and white, or mottled all shades between. They are point-eared, sharp-muzzled, broad-chested, and have long, sensitive faces. Somehow or other they look like lawyers. I think it is Burroughs who says the dog will probably be a man before any other animal. The leader of this train is a

Huskies

markworthy young dog—steady, observant, wise.

The Indian, who seems to be a master of finesse in his art, told me these things about his huskies :

They have a lively conviction that they are sent into the world to fight each other, and, as a general thing, they are allowed to fight in a free-for-all fashion, for the survivor who proves "fittest" becomes lead-dog.

In their training, line upon line is needed. They are frequently, and no doubt justly, punished. But there is an excuse for the dogs, for it seems generally agreed that they take their character from their human environment. If raised among uncouth, rough people, they, too, will be uncouth and rough.

The usual run for a train is about fifty miles a day. The driver runs with them at a jog-trot.

One dog will haul as much as 300 pounds on a hard, icy trail, but 150 pounds is the rule when the driver breaks the road on snowshoes.

When the train stops, the dogs curl up in the snow and sleep thus, wisely husbanding their strength.

St. Bernards and Newfoundlands who have been brought north to draw sleds never learn this habit of resting. They wait till their harness is off. This is the

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vital difference between the native and the civilised dog.

When in harness the dogs are fed twice a day, but only once when off work. They are notorious thieves, and everything eatable must be "cached"—that is, raised on posts or tall trees.

A good dog costs \$50—a real El Dorado of fortune for an Indian—making truer than ever the dictum that "the best thing a man possesses in his dog."

I have sympathy with that Indian who asked the missionary to baptise his dog that was ill. The missionary tried to explain, but the Indian replied :

"If my dog cannot go to the white man's heaven, neither shall I. We both go to the Indian's happy hunting grounds."

XXXVIII

“ PIONEERS ! O, PIONEERS ! ”

“ O East is East and West is West, and never the twain
shall meet,
Till earth and sky meet presently at God's great
judgment seat.”

—KIPLING.



I AM spending the week in Winnipeg. If it were not for the girls being here at school, I would prefer to spend it in Poplar Bluff. A friend tells me this only goes to show that women are creatures of habit.

Winnipeg is a hard-voiced city. It has not the time-enriched look of southern cities. It has far too many “eligible sites for building.” It is still in the ‘prentice stage.

Just now everyone is talking about the bonspiel. All true Winnipeggers are devotees of the game. ‘Tis marrow for their bones. Curling is surely,

“ The peerless game,
That feeds the flame
Of fellowship in man.”

The president of the Scottish team of curlers who visited Canada said that

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if Canada be the chosen home of Scotland's ain game, then undoubtedly Winnipeg is the very fireplace or hearth of the game in the Dominion.

All these Western men are agreed on one thing. They will never go "back East" again permanently. When I hear a man say this I ask:

"But you'd like to be brought back there when you die?"

He looks surprised for a moment, as though I meant it as a joke, and then meditative, for his thoughts have ranged back to some little thistle-grown plot in Simcoe, Huron, or Bruce, where the folks rest side by side.

"Ah, yes!" he replied, "the land where you were born lies lighter to your bones."

They all feel the same about it, but, in the meantime, send one of them to Ontario for a week, and he is sick with longing to stand at the corner of Portage and Main, in Winnipeg, "to see things hustle."

A great many of these Westerners are men who have failed in business, and who have come up to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, or Alberta in "the army that never 'listed.'" They are a public of men who have been in tight places. But, at last, they have succeeded. They have grown rich and increased with goods, and

“Pioneers! O, Pioneers!”

are Westerners to the last drop of their blood.

If the Western man is not too busy planting orchards, buying grain, or tunneling mountains, he may find time to tell you, with the steady, calm egotism indicative of a strong character, how he is a real-estate agent, assessor, pound-keeper, auctioneer, horse-dealer, insurance broker, and undertaker, and that he gets on fairly well in the whole successive list.

Presently, he will be mayor of the town, then Member of Parliament, and, before he knows what has happened, he has prospects for a Senatorship, which means that he does go “back East” permanently, with the Simcoe, Huron, or Bruce thistle-grown plot well in sight.

XXXIX

IT IS SPRING AGAIN

"I am sick of four walls and a ceiling ;
I have need of the sky."

—RICHARD HOVEY.



It is spring again, and we are passing through the "robin racket." Monsieur Redbreast has donned his waistcoat of "fuller crimson"—a handsome one, indeed, and not in the least sinful.

That fifer fellow, the blackbird, has beat him in the journey northward by quite two weeks.

All our world is blithesome with Robin's mellow, lilting refrain. The poetry of the early flowers is set to his music. And when springtime ebbs, some of us will know that we, too, have been keyed up to his debonair music, for we shall find ourselves back again in the prosaic humdrum key of C major.

I have found out where there are three duck-broods. I tether my horse near by and visit them daily. The soggy turf wheezes under my feet, but my long rubber boots keep my feet dry.

It is Spring Again

What a twittering and fluttering is there ; what a show of gaping, clamouring mouths when the mother-bird brings a tit-bit home.

Madame Mallard is kept very, very busy with her downy progeny. The drake, I am credibly informed, does not allow nursery duties to interfere with his leisure or pleasure. He gives madam little aid when he is a prospective father, and none when the prospects become actualities. Apologists, on the other hand, state this to be only an apparent lack of chivalry, for he retires of necessity to shed his beguiling wedding garment, and by the time his nestlings have become tiny bits of waddling flannel, he is almost denuded of feathers, and, in consequence, unable to fly.

I know, too, where a night-hawk has laid an egg. She has made no nest, but has deposited her treasure on the bare ground. I am sure she is lazy and slatternly. When I bestir her she rises stupidly and perches *along* an adjacent branch, never across it.

The folk hereabout call her by several names. Some know her as the night-jar, others as the fern-owl, and still others designate her as the eve-churr. The last name is the most appropriate, for her note is a prolonged "chur-r-r," like that of an electric wire.

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She really belongs to the goatsucker family. She is a brownish grey, much mottled with white, and has a white mark on her throat the shape of the letter V. When plump in the autumn, the night-hawk's flesh is said to be excellent eating.

The orioles have several names, too. The Indians call them "fire-birds," and the settlers "hang-birds," because of their pendent nests.

These flame-coloured flowers of the air are welcome visitants to the homesteaders. Their appetites are uncritical, for they eat every insect that crawls or flies, to say nothing of larvæ in the "infernally wriggle of maturity."

In the river the suckers are running up to spawn. They are no petty fishlings, these suckers that sally forth against the braggart waters. They weigh from five to ten pounds each.

Once, on the Manitoulin Island, I dropped a big black bass off my hook, and our Indian boatman consoled me and at the same time paid me a compliment by saying :

"Big folks nor big fish ain't allus the best."

This is entirely true of suckers. Their flesh lacks crispness and is insipid.

My net is constructed of fine-meshed wire fencing. Many folk would scorn to

It is Spring Again

catch fish thus, but what odds how your fish is caught so long as it is caught?

Besides, suckers do not rise to the fly. The salmon of British Columbia are of the same temper, and there is a story afloat to the effect that the English Commissioners who were appointed to determine the boundaries between the United States and Canada gave up Washington and Oregon "because the demmed fish wouldn't bite, you know."

The suckers are forcing their way to the spawning grounds at the head waters of the river. Is it reason or automatism? Is it internal or external stimuli that hurl these finny denizens up the turbulent, pewter-coloured stream to spawn and die?

I have not time to decide these questions. I am kept busy killing the fish. I am an actual barbarian, feverish with the lust of killing. There they lie on the sand, in all the panting glory of their eighteen or twenty-four inches! They gasp and flop their finned tails, while I brutally hit them on the back of their heads or crush them with my heel.

Only the other day I turned away while a chicken's head was chopped off, and now, with absolutely no pangs of remorse, I am committing wholesale slaughter.

"Ah, well," says Pokagon, my companion, "dat be all right. It's not in

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'uman nature to veel bad for vishes, and vishes veel not anyting, so ve vill keel the vishes and eat im to-night."

"'Tis not all fishing to fish," wrote Bradford.

I thought of this when our blessed damozel flatly refused to touch our catch. She used coarse language—very coarse. I explained that the proper terms were "decapitation" and "evisceration."

The only reason one should keep a cook in this country is that the cook has to live.

I cleaned the fish myself, cut them into steaks, sewed the steaks in smoked bacon, broiled them, and served with sliced lemon.

What delicious things there are to eat in this world!

Allah be praised!

XL

STILL NORTHWARD

HAVING sold everything saleable, the Padre has decided to leave Poplar Bluff to seek "pastures new." There is no use arguing with him, threatening, or beseeching him. He is going to fold up his tents and steal away. He wants to have "a look at Edmonton," and I am to look at it too.

I have been observing the Padre's head. On the spot phrenologists have located inhabitiveness, instead of a bump he has a hollow. Ah, well! Adam wouldn't stay in Eden, nor Lucifer in heaven.

This is how I came to spend the month of May in town, house-hunting.

Our train was due to leave Poplar Bluff at 2 a.m., but it was three hours late. In that den of gregarious discomfort, the station waiting-room, all of us yawned, sneezed, and inwardly anathematised. Our quarters were what Nicholas Nickleby would term "pernicious snug."

There was no nonsense about modern sanitation or so many cubic feet of air per person.

Janey Canuck

From their looks and conversation, the party individualised into "commercials," a judge on circuit, a fur-dealer, lumber-jacks, a peddling Hebrew, a woman with a brand-new baby going from the hospital to the lumber camp, homesteaders, investors from the States, railway officials on construction work, and a couple of contractors.

From Poplar Bluff, for 180 miles north, the Canadian Northern Railway runs through a muskeg. Instead of abusing the railway company for their irregular service and other delinquencies, we should immortalise them for the exuberance of their faith and the plenitude of their works. It is less than four years since the only engine hereabout was the Indian pony, and the only Pullman a wooden travois on to which the passenger was securely roped.

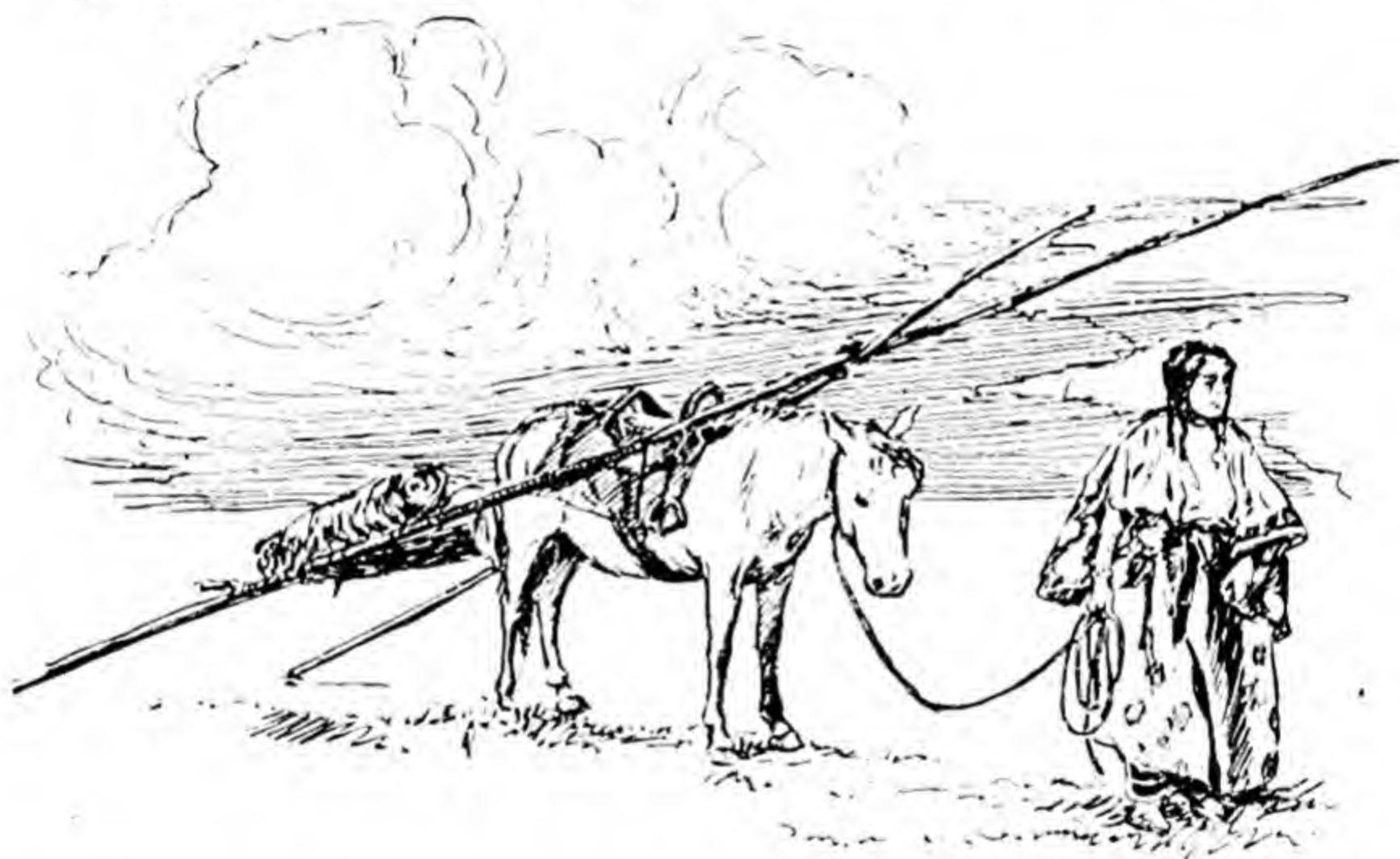
How wide the muskeg is one cannot say. For days a man might flounder here and never see its outer rim. Our Pullman home is literally "a lodge in a wilderness," and we are passing through a boundless "contiguity of shade."

The road is not well ballasted, and the brunt of it comes on the passenger's spine. The car does not rock—it plunges.

When we stop at a station, the frogs command our attention. I try to place their notes. Now they seem a full bass, and then they remind one of the not unpleasing oboe.

Still Northward

To me the frog always seems unfinished. It is a compound of many, but still not much. It hops like a rabbit, speaks and makes love like a man, and sings like a gramophone. It has teeth in its upper jaw, but never cuts lower ones. It lives in the water like a sucker, but, nevertheless, it is a real-estate agent, for it, too, catches its prey with its tongue.



My, oh my! and there are people who still say that the Providence who created all things has no sense of drollery.

There was no sleeping. This was why I raised the blind and watched the sunrise. There was not much to see—just the light on the sleughs. Yet the moment was not lost, for at last I had seen in nature the exact golden tone I had often admired

Janey Canuck

in Cuyp's marsh pictures, and as often doubted.

The marshes stand thick with Labrador tea, known in these parts as "squaw tea." Considering the latitude, this wise little plant appropriately grows fur on the reverse side of every leaf.

We all got up at Erwood, and had breakfast. It was served in one of the two log shanties that constitute the village. The chops and potatoes were well cooked, and, contrary to our expectations, the place was clean.

The Red Deer Lumber Company have a limit near here, and the Padre has one eighteen miles away, which is still undeveloped.

There is yet ice in the river. At Etiomami, a village is springing up. The "tote" road of the Red Deer Lumber Company starts from this point. The river drivers have gathered. There are some roughs and, here and there, a ruffian. They wink and throw kisses if you are so bold as to look out of the window. Man has properly been defined as the male-factor of society.

The spruce grows in "bunches" or "stands" along the rivers, on firmer grounds which occur, like oases, in the muskegs.

At Mistatim and Bannock there are logs, and logs, and logs. They hide the

Still Northward

sky line and almost shut out the sun. The men in the car speak of them as "pretty good sticks."

Some of the trees hereabout are girdled. I am told they have been tapped for turpentine.

The Padre told me to keep a sharp look-out, and I would see our name on a siding near here. The name? Never mind! It happened this way. The Padre was scorching down this track in the superintendent's motor-car, when it suddenly leaped the rails and landed him in a sleugh. This is why his name was tacked to the siding.

In the muskeg we passed several bedsteads built of poles. Wayfarers erected these because there was not one foot of dry land whereon they might lie.

At Tisdale we emerge from the forest and into an excellent farming community. The land is mostly held by the Union Trust Company of Toronto, or sold by them to the Salvation Army, for the settlement of English colonists. The lands are in charge of a splendid young Englishman, named Wilson, whom I met last winter. While we were talking of him, he boarded the car here, and we had a few minutes chat before the train pulled out.

Like all these embryonic places in the West, Tisdale has hideous tin structures

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and other, wooden, ones, not so hideous. There is something that strikes one as inexorable about the straight sides and windows of all these buildings. The roofs, too, just cover the houses without an inch to spare.

The Padre is so intensely Western that my criticisms nettle him, and he quotes the proverb anent children, fools, and half-done work.

Later he tries to soften the asperity of his remark by telling me that, according to Kingsley's maxim, a man is quite justified in building an ugly house because the only part that matters is the inside. Since he cannot see the outside of his own house, the important thing is to have beautiful houses around him.

The next station is Star City. In the West seven houses make a city. We got off the train here, had dinner, bought a rifle, engaged a team and driver, and started across country for Melfort. One of the mares we recognised as "Jessie," a former possession.

The rifle was not purchased for the delinquent farmers we were "after," but because the Padre wanted to see how near he could come to a duck and *not* shoot it. And there were ducks a-plenty—mallards, divers, and blue-winged teal. They rise from every sleugh and pond, with ill-balanced flight.

Still Northward

We called on several farmers, and all seemed to be prosperous.

We were discussing the price of land and other business matters with considerable warmth, when our horses, in crossing Willow Creek, now at flood-tide, struck a hole and went into twelve feet of water. The seats, valises, robes, gun, and coats went down stream, but the Padre held on to me, all the while warning me in excited gasps not to get excited. I managed to keep my chin up, and the horses swam to shore with us.

We were as wet as King Lear, and twice as miserable. The driver was cross. He was a country boy, but knew, nevertheless, that it is always wise for the wrongdoer to assume the injured part.

Some of our belongings were rescued further down, where the flood had carried them to shore. A box of seidlitz powders in my valise fizzed over and through the contents in a manner that would have been heart-breaking had it not been so ludicrous.

I made my way to a one-roomed farmhouse near by, and madam turned her husband out while I stripped at the stove. The children remained and watched me with wide-eyed interest. While my underwear dried, I sat by the oven wrapped in a blanket, sipping tea and hot whisky.

Captain Murphy, a gallant young bachelor who owns the adjoining property,

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came to our rescue. He supplied us with robes and rugs, and gallantly loaned me a big, grey military coat (Dufferin Rifles, Ontario), which I wore till I arrived at Melfort.

But our troubles were not over. The driver, after trying to drown us, proceeded to lose us. It was not surprising, though, for scores of trails, in long, black welts, run across the land in all directions. We went miles out of our road, sometimes taking an angle across sodden ground where the wheels "drave heavily," and finding always that the "near cut" proved the longest way round.

It was Robert Louis Stevenson who said to travel hopefully was better than to arrive.

It was an undignified, immodest impression I made on the men at the hotel entrance, but it is not easy to step out of a high democrat with discretion when one has no skirts on. A commercial traveller for a clothing house offered to let me have his samples. Here was a fine chivalry which discounted the days when knight-hood was in flower.

Our trunk was brought over from the station, and we were soon suitably clothed and in our right minds. Our *maître d'hôtel* is one Flanagan. I remember seeing him years ago in Ontario, where he still has four hotels. He keeps a most creditable

Still Northward

house here. He is a Roman Catholic, but in evidence of the fact that he is not bigoted, it may be adduced that he once played the fiddle at an Orange dance in the village of Cookstown, Ontario.

We are now in the land of the Mounted Police, and these stalwart troopers add a touch of colour to the somewhat drab life of the village and plains. Some of them are handsome in a sun-browned, broad-shouldered, manly way, and have that quality known in the West as "sand," and in the East as "backbone."

All the men one meets here are optimistic, and this is only natural, for every man is making money. Saskatchewan is only another way of saying wheat—and wheat means money.

It is not an unpleasant pastime to torment one of these optimists with remarks about the frost, mosquitoes, and other Western peculiarities. It delights me to look sceptical and quote Bret Harte's lines :

" True the springs are rather late,
And early falls predominate,
But the ice-crop's pretty sure,
And the air is kind of pure."

Under the kind ciceronage of Mrs. Edgar Jarvis, a former Toronto girl, we visited the new Victorian Order Hospital,

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which was opened yesterday. It is as well equipped as some hospitals that are several years old, and the head nurse has a face like the Madonna, if you can imagine a Madonna with just a suggestion of quiet humour about her.

XLI

THROUGH SASKATCHEWAN

"Where there's neither a road nor a tree,
But only my Maker an' me."



WE arrived at Prince Albert on Saturday. The population is five thousand. The city rises from the Saskatchewan River (north branch), and the residential part is situated on a fine hill. Boom conditions exist in a mild way.

On Sunday we went to St. Alban's pro-cathedral. The rector, the Rev. A. D. Dewdney, kindly entertained us at dinner. He is a clever speaker, and has succeeded, in spite of his theological training, in retaining his individuality. He was assisted in the service by two young Englishmen, who have come to this country recently in a party of sixty laymen under the direction of Archdeacon Lloyd. Each one (married or single) is paid a salary of \$300 per annum. \$50 is allowed for the purchase of a horse, and \$150 for the erection of a house. Their excellent incomes, it is thus seen, will enable them to enjoy themselves much and often.

Janey Canuck

Archdeacon Lloyd, who is about to remove from Lloydminster to Prince Albert, is universally respected in this province, not only for his work in connection with "the all-British colony," but because he is "a square-set man and honest," and one of untiring energy.

In the evening we were invited to the See house by the Bishop and Mrs. Newman. His lordship was slightly indisposed, but impressed me as a man of marked culture, intelligence, and perfect manners. Mrs. Newman is an interested worker along educational and missionary lines, and is at present blocking out plans for a girls' school in Prince Albert.

Shortly after leaving Prince Albert we passed through the scene of the Riel Rebellion, in 1885. It was in this district, at Duck Lake, that Beardy and his warriors gave so much trouble.

This was also the scene of the dramatic killing of Almighty Voice, a Cree Indian who, in order to avoid arrest, shot and killed Sergeant Colebrook, of the Royal North-West Mounted Police.

The Indian was "wanted" for stealing a sheep. As the officer approached, Almighty Voice awaited him with a levelled rifle and threatened to shoot, but the firm-jawed man in the scarlet coat knew he must take the Indian at the peril of his life, and so he advanced squarely.

Through Saskatchewan

There was a yell of flame, then silence. stone had been added dation whereupon our pire is laid four-square. was not the mere a brave officer. It repudiation of all law. let coat had become Indian mind the sym- power. The Mounted Police were the representatives of the Great Queen-Mother who, all knew, wore scarlet herself.



metal, a spurt
Another
to the foun-
Western Em-
The deed
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In spite of the strenuous and unrelaxing efforts of the dead man's comrades, they were unable to capture the murderer, for the Indians hid him well. Over a year later, Almighty Voice shot one of his allies—a half-breed named Napoleon Venne. Once more the police set out to capture the Cree, and, this time, located him in a bluff of trees. When they closed in on him he killed three men and wounded two. This was an expensive sheep Almighty Voice had stolen. A field gun was brought from Regina, and the bluff systematically shelled.

The final, dramatic scene was watched by the Indians of the district, including the aged mother of Almighty Voice. She recounted the deeds of vengeance her son had visited on his enemies, and chanted

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his death song to the whistle of the shells that killed him.

Some day a Canadian artist will put the scene on canvas, and call it "An Indian Mizpah."

* * * * *

Having twenty hours to wait at Warman Junction, we visited Saskatoon, a brisk young town of five thousand people, situated on the south branch of the Saskatchewan River.

The adjacent country is all prairie, and of marked fertility. I don't like the prairie; it is too smooth. One may walk, or run, but never climb. Nothing defeats the eye but distance. The thermometer doesn't register anything in the shade, for there is no shade. Indeed, Nature has the last word here. In the city her voice is muffled and subdued, but on the prairie, storm and tempest, snow and wind obey her word.

Its absolute barrenness of trees reminded me of an old writer on a part of Derbyshire, who said:

"Trees I doe acknowledge are soe few in ye Peake espetially, that had Judas been there, he would have repented before he could have found one to act his execution."

This huge sameness, this "encircling vastness," weighs like lead on one's spirits. The sky and the land are the only things

Through Saskatchewan

in the world, and they are vast, implacable things of silence.

On the prairie one can see *the colour of the air*. To-day it is a mellow atmosphere of grey, shot through with silver and gold, or, as artists would express it, with "high values."

The frost-breaking anemone is the only bit of colour on the ground. She wears a fluffy, fur ruff—a most wise provision for Manitoba's provincial flower. The word anemone comes from a Greek word which means breath, wind, or spirit. It is a pretty fancy that the flower becomes a living thing when breathed upon by the spirit of the wind. This is why I do not pluck it.

A real-estate man asked us if we were "looking about for propositions." He attached himself to us, that he might put us next a "straight tip." The Padre wasn't even polite, and explained to me afterwards that he always doubts a man who has a "straight tip." Nothing, he contends, is quite so deadly. For my part, I think the man looked as harmless and innocent as the millennial lamb, and I would have liked to hear about it.

We returned to Warman about midnight, and slept the sleep of the just and the tired, on camp beds in the hall.

We left for Edmonton the next day.

Janey Canuck

Near Langham—which appeared to be a village of Russians—we passed a girl herding sheep in the rain. The sheep huddled down into the stony, naked plains like bits of fallen clouds.

It is a good thing that their hey-day is unmarred by misgivings of approaching mint sauce. In this respect they are happier than mere men. The Padre resented this remark, and said I was “grossly materialistic.”

After a run of about twenty-five miles we crossed the Saskatchewan, a mouse-coloured river that scrambles all over the country. Here we noticed buffalo “wallows”—saucer-like depressions in the ground, where the animals rubbed themselves. The plough is obliterating them very rapidly. The vast plains are chequer-marked, too, by the feet of the animals as they crossed and recrossed it on their wide wanderings. It is not long since the bones of these buffaloes were gathered into huge mounds and shipped east to the manufacturers of buttons and fertilisers.

Egypt once claimed the title of “the granary of the world.” She talked of her “flesh pots,” and boasted she could feed all men and feast all gods. Canada’s claim to this proud title is growing with the years, and soon will be a clear one.

Through Saskatchewan

It is true Canada is not exactly a Utopia, Ltd., for there is rough, hard work to be done before homes of comfort or affluence are built. But, on the other hand, the Old World farmer will find he has no tithes to pay, few insect pests, no costly manures to purchase, no heavy taxes to raise, and no antiquated laws pertaining to tenants to observe. He will be his own landlord, or, if he likes the title better, a lord of lands. 'Tis a million pities people of the Old World are so slow in taking advantage of this waste heritage. As one listens to the ominous growl of the workers in England, one marvels the powers-that-be do not face them hither. If flesh and blood cannot enter heaven, it is, nevertheless, conversely true that heaven can enter flesh and blood.

Something has happened to our train, and we have to wait a few hours. When the train stops, you can hear what the passengers are saying.

An American gives it as his opinion that we are generous in Canada, in that we only charge five cents a mile for five dollars' worth of misery.

The youth opposite us is a professional English jockey, and is making merry at the expense of a horse which contemplates us over the fence with large, mild eyes. It is a big, sorrel horse of Gothic con-

Janey Canuck

formation, with obtrusive ribs and a used-up tail. The youth is entertaining, but exactly fulfils the requisites that go to make up a jockey :

“ Just a tinge of wickedness,
With a touch of devil-may-care ;
Just a bit of bone and meat
With plenty of nerve and dare.
And on top of all things, he must be
a tough kid.”

When dinner is served, the steward sets a table for us in the sleeper, because the dining-room car is crowded. It is abominable, and almost crushes my life out. He explains that he would not have me eat with the “ rough people ” from the other cars, but I tell him I like rough people best. Our porter is also officious. He presses his attention on us till we sigh for some marked neglect.

We pass villages, nearly all of which have sprung up in the last eighteen months. Large advertisements at the stations give the local needs in the way of elevators, shops, or industries. The hotels and banks are the most pretentious buildings. In most cases the banks have been shipped in sections from British Columbia.

At Lloydminster we cross the boundary between Alberta and Saskatchewan. This is the headquarters of the “ all-British

Through Saskatchewan

colony " of three thousand persons, established by the Rev. T. M. Barr, in 1903.

Hereabout one comes into the ranch belt, and cattle, grazing or meditatively digestive, may be seen at all degrees of diminution and distance.

XLII

EDMONTON

"After us cometh a multitude,
Prosper the work of our hands,
That we may feed with our land's food
The folk of other lands."

NATURE did her best for Edmonton. Seated like a queen on a throne, she may cast her shoe over as large and fine an extent of country as the Dominion has to show. There seems to be no limit to the possibilities of this northernmost city on the banks of the Saskatchewan river.

A Hudson Bay Company's post since 1795, Edmonton's history, until the last four years, was practically that of the fur trade. In 1901 the population was 2,652. It is now nearly 18,000, for three great railways have opened it up to the outside world.

The first thing that strikes you about the city is its up-to-dateness. It is not wanting in any good thing that makes for the commonwealth or commonhealth. In spite of croakers, pessimists, and other odd fish, one may pronounce the land values

Edmonton

to be soundly progressive, and in no way fictitious. Few cities in the world afford better opportunities for the investment of capital and push.

Money is easily made, and as easily spent; and this is not an unmixed evil, for people who live from hand to mouth are an impotent, inferior people. And here everyone thinks and prays for money. And why not? In the oldest prayer-book of the Aryan race (the Rig-Veda), is found this prayer:

“O Lord, prosper us in the getting and keeping.”

Throughout the length and breadth of the Dominion, the name of Edmonton is coupled with municipal ownership, for in this city they realise that this principle identifies all classes with the city rather than against it, and unites all in an insistent desire for good government. They realise, too, that public utilities cannot be left with safety in private hands.

Again we repeat it, Nature did her best for Edmonton. Come along, my fine fellow! Let us climb this hill that leads to Clover Bar. We will stop when we reach the “Lord of the Land”—that is, the “burly-barked, man-bodied tree,” which stands at attention on its crest like a gallant grenadier. And having bowed to my lord, the Pine, let us look about and view the river as,

Janey Canuck

“ Inward and outward to northward and southward
the beach lines linger and curl,
As a silver-wrought garment that clings to and
follows the firm, sweet limbs of a girl.”

’Tis a river that literally loiters over golden sands, and anyone may garner the grains for the mere sifting of them. Down in the valley and over on the uplands the city stretches out like a dream city. Edmonton is Queen of the Northland.

It is a quiet day, and one may hear the regular *crescendo* and *diminuendo* of the mill saws, in the valley below, as they bite hard, with flying teeth, into the solid spruce. The straw-coloured piles of lumber that are piling up in serried ranks represent a vast outlay of money and industry, and supply a commodity that is invaluable to a growing country.

And here on her lap, Mother Earth has spread out for her children a bed of coal. If you care to, you may go down a shaft, or into a drift, following hard after “ the burrowing toilers of the mine.” But don’t go ! Never go underground till you are put there ! Coal mines are what the man-milliner in Dickens would describe as “ dem’d moist, unpleasant places.”

In Edmonton they produce the best coal in the West—as they do in several other places—and it is dirt cheap. Thousands of tons are “ lifted ” every year.

Now, a gold mine is only another name

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for a gamble in which some one holds the four aces against you. A gold mine spells out the comparative degrees of mine, miner, minus ; but with coal it is different. A coal mine is loaded with stuff that may be measured out with a rule. Coal, too, can be developed and marketed (U.V.)—that is to say, the Unions willing—with a comparatively small outlay.

It is the coal of England that has given the nation its position among countries, and which has contributed, more than any other cause, to the wealth of Europe. Within the last few years there has been uncovered here, and in British Columbia, coal to the extent of billions of tons, so that we may safely claim a brilliant future for this city.

When we come down from the hill, we have time and opportunity to learn that the people of Edmonton are socially inclined. There is much tea, and tennis, golf, 'mobiling, dancing, dining, and wild riding across the hills ; for when people are healthy and prosperous they are instinctively hospitable, and always in a big-handed, big-hearted way.

The Padre has decided to come to Edmonton to live, and I have decided to remain at Poplar Bluff. We will compromise on Edmonton.

XLIII

TWO WESTERN TYPES

HIS crop-eared bull-terriers were yapping before the fire while our host was showing us his moss-bag. He wore it years ago at Fort Pelly, where his father, Major Griesbach of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, taught the Indians and whisky-smugglers the might and right of law.

When the Major, who, we would observe parenthetically, was the first man to join the force, was moved to this district, he brought with him this moss-bag and the stripling that once filled it.

He is a typical Westerner, this young host of ours, except that he has read more widely than the average Westerner, and talks better—much better.

He is W. A. Griesbach, ratepayer—make your salute, gentlemen!—but we call him “Billy.” And why, forsooth, shouldn’t we? Isn’t he a Westerner born? Just tell us that!

Wasn’t he reared to the toot of the “wind-jammer” that scared off the “wolfers” and other bad whites?

Two Western Types

Doesn't he make our wills, take our briefs, and help us dodge the banks until next balance-day?

Isn't he a Captain of Horse, and doesn't he show us the correct way to stiffen our necks and spines when we ride out on parade?

Didn't he chase De Wet in South Africa?

Isn't he a dead-game sport without being "sporty"?

Didn't this kid contest our constituency against the Minister of the Interior himself?

Didn't he celebrate his thirtieth birthday as Mayor of Edmonton? Didn't he?

Now, why shouldn't we call him "Billy"?

The other man of the party is Sergeant Pringle, late of the Royal North-West Mounted Police.

I sink deeper into the chair, and, for once, hold my tongue while the men talk. This is an opportunity not to be missed.

He is a grizzled old chap, this Rider of the Plains, and talks to the ex-mayor as if he owned him. And he does own him, for didn't he teach the kid how to stand at 'tention, and generally to mind his p's and q's? You can see the whole thing without being told.

The sergeant is telling us how the late Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney came to

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lose a bottle of brandy from under his very lips while surrounded by a whole cordon of "the Mounted."

And what a "to-do" there was about it. Such a trivial matter to make a week's inquiry over! And who it was that took—no! I mean who it was that killed Cock Robin—but I'll not tell the sparrow's name. Indeed, I'll not.

The talk drifts on to the redcoats of "the force" who have graduated to the blackcoats of the Church. There are two. They are in Western Canada, and are Anglicans. This old trooper has high hopes they will be bishops some day. He thinks the Blacks owe it to the Reds, and I think they do, too.

The discussion reminded the sergeant that all "the boys" liked the Scotch preacher, Dr. McGregor, who accompanied the Marquis of Lorne through the Territories in 1881. Their fondness for him seems to lie mainly in the fact that he arranged for the men to attend Sunday service in fatigue dress.

"I've no doubt," says the sergeant, "the preacher heard the boys swearing about dress-parade and us dog-tired."

There was a pause. A log fell; and some one back in the shadow remarked:

"Which all goes to show that cursing has its use."

The Marquis of Lorne, who was the

Two Western Types

first Governor-General to visit Assiniboia and Saskatchewan, surprised even the crack shots who escorted him by his cool and unerring aim. He never failed to bring down his antelope or bird.

The party travelled forty miles each day, and the horses died like flies. Once, the party missed the supply train sent out to meet them and were, in consequence, reduced to a biscuit a day for two days.

Pound Maker, a Cree Indian chief, accompanied His Excellency's party as guide. When anyone from Ottawa rode up to question him about the route, the Indian would take refuge in a wild flight. Presently, he would come back warily, but ever kept a keen eye on would-be interviewers.

It was the Marquis of Lorne who arranged for rations of butter and potatoes to be served the Mounted Police, and, to this day, every mother's son prays that, when he dies, he may go straight to the highest heaven where, it is said on good authority, there are no mosquitoes, Indians, or blizzards.

Sergeant Pringle was also honoured in being selected as Guard to the Duke and Duchess of York when they made their Western tour. On one occasion the Duchess had a conversation with Pringle, asking him questions about the work, his life, and his family. Shortly afterwards

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an inquisitive *aide* asked him what Her Royal Highness had said.

"Ah!" replied the plainsman, "the lady was just asking me to pay her for last month's washing."

Then these men talked about Captain Chalmers, when it suddenly occurred to me this was the man whose memorial tablet is opposite my seat at All Saints'—the very man around whom I have been weaving romances while the first and second lessons are being read.

This Captain Chalmers was shot in South Africa, in the Boer War. "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*," reads the inscription, like all other inscriptions over fallen soldiers; but it isn't a true one. Death for any cause is never sweet to a young man in the flood-time of life. They are only high-sounding catchwords meant to drown the gasp and strangle of a strong man clutching at the veldt sand in his death-agony.

Chalmers, it turns out, was not a particularly romantic person. Indeed, the men called him "Scissors," because of his long, thin legs. He enlisted in the Police, and made the best patrol reports ever sent in to Ottawa. Being a civil engineer, and painstaking, these accurate observations greatly delighted his officers.

Later, Chalmers resigned from the force to follow his profession. He was a quiet

Two Western Types

and reticent man among men who were not quiet and reticent, and so did not shine as "a good fellow."

When war broke out in South Africa, he was appointed captain of one of the Canadian regiments, and while rescuing a brother officer met his death, being shot several times through the body.

The men never weary telling of how "Old Scissors" turned out to be the most efficient officer of them all, and how he showed a grasp of things military and tactical that no one ever dreamed to be hidden away under his sedate exterior.

And once "Old Scissors" had a serious love-affair—— No, on second thoughts, I'll not tell it.

XLIV

A RUN ACROSS COUNTRY

“What odds
Who wins the fox’s tail if we,
Regardless of the men and gods,
Ride swift and hard and glad and free?”
—R. W. GILBERT.



WE don’t ride to hounds at Edmonton, because there are under-brush, wire fences, and several other inventions of the Evil One.

No! We have paper chases. The “hares,” who take a discreet course over previously constructed hurdles, get a start of three minutes. The rider, in this space, takes a hurried look at the “cinches,” slips the whip back on the wrist, and whispers a few words into the neck of the big yellow horse who is in fine fettle for this day and hour. Then we’re off.

The horses bunch and crowd for two seconds, and make a bound towards the hill, their hoofs drumming on the sod like muffled thunder.

Off we go! Champ of bit, ring of shoe, creak of saddle, neck for neck, stride for stride in a duel with time and space.

A Run Across Country

It is a great place this Canada West—the country of strong men, strong women, straight living, and hard riding. Tut! Who wants to go to heaven?

Goldenrod is making a superb run, and his great barrel pulses evenly between my knees, without catch or strain. He is a mighty fine fellow, this Irish hunter, a rare equine unification of fire and steel that always keeps me dubious as to my mastership of him.

Yes! I am riding astride. Most of us do. It is safer, more comfortable, more healthful, and in every way consistent with good taste. Besides, here is the wide and tolerant West; everyone knows that a woman's boots are not pinned to her skirts.

In a narrow defile between trees, we charge the hill. It seems sky-high and perpendicular, but the paper leads this way. The horses slip, stretch, strain, and gasp, but never shirk. It is the dry air and altitude—and the quality known as "grit"—that sweeps these superb creatures up the incline; for here, in this land of daylight and sunshine, no one ever heard of a winded horse.

Only one horse "bucks;" but he makes amends for the others. As far as his saddle handicap will allow, he spends a maximum of time in the air, and a minimum on the sod. But the rider is

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mounted to stay, for he is full of years and honours where a wild horse is concerned.

At the top of the hill there is a spread-eagle field, for the trail is lost in yellow stubble. It was Dr. Ferris who found it. It was bound to be a Ferris, for there are four of them riding to-day. Irish blood is sure to show when it comes to a run 'cross country.

Again we are off, at a pace that sets one's brain in a whirl, and transfixes every sensory nerve. We skirt a sleugh, cross a meadow, take a stream, miss the paper, find it, and are out on the highway.

Once more we cross a stubble field, where Mrs. Pardee, on a big black horse, sets a heart-breaking pace for a following field. She is slight, this reckless rider, but has the intuitive hands that never fail to compel horse-flesh.

Catherine Henderson is pressing her hard on a massive-chested bay, while Captain Jack O'Neil Hayes is making a good spurt for lead.

I was not in for the finish, for Goldenrod swerved suddenly with what sailor's designate as a "round turn," and refused to go further. He could not be cajoled or coaxed to follow the crowd; not he.

"The horse," said a Hindu philosopher, "is a noble animal, but when irritated he will not do so."

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I hit him for the first time. I hit him hard, and then the saddle slid to his haunches. The girth was broken, and that is why he swerved. There is no doubt of it; Goldenrod will be an angel long before me.

I apologised to him, mended the girth with my garters, and hied me gingerly to the Golf Club where little groups, with frightened faces, were discussing an accident.

It appears that, near the finish, Mr. Lane's big, yellow fiend slipped the bunch and took a flying leap with the mighty muscles of a black-tailed buck. There was a collision, no one knows how, for in a second Mr. Lane and Major Jamieson, the Master of the Meet, were prostrate and insensible; one with a head wound, the other with ribs penetrating his lungs.

Painful fingers are at work on our hearts and throats as we turn homewards, and no one wants to talk, for it is an hour of fear and uncertainty, with dark overshadowings.

What was it I said about the West a little while ago when the run started? Oh, yes! I remember:

"There is no need of hell while earth shall last."

XLV

THE OLD FORT

"They burnt a corpse upon the sand,
The light shone out afar;
It guided home the plunging boats
That beat from Zanzibar.
Spirit of Fire, where'er Thy altars rise,
Thou art Light of Guidance to our eyes!"

—KIPLING.



THE old Hudson Bay Fort at Edmonton is still standing. It was built nigh unto a century ago, and was, in those days, "the last house." It was a small hub, but its spokes radiated through a land empire-wide.

When I said "empire-wide," I chose the word advisedly. The grant made by Charles II. of England to his cousin, Prince Rupert, and a small company of less than twenty, included a territory of $4\frac{1}{2}$ million square miles, or area one-third greater than the whole of Europe. Neither the King nor the Royal Geographers had any idea of the vastness of the domain bestowed upon "The Governour and Company of Gentlemen Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay." It was known as Prince Rupert's Land, and

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the King was to be recompensed annually by the Gentlemen Adventurers with "two elks, and two black beavers."

It has been estimated that the toll of furs taken out of this district amounts to one hundred and forty million dollars.

To the traveller, freighter, or hunter who had traversed hundreds—yes, thousands—of miles, by land and water, moon in and moon out, in peril often, in weariness, in hunger, and in pain, what a haven this little cluster of log houses high on the banks of the Saskatchewan must have appeared to his famished eyes! It was the promised land and, more than anything else, made intelligible to the Indian's mind the idea of heaven. True it was a noisy, sensual, and often a wicked, heaven; but still, every man's conception of a paradise consists in those things he needs or wants most.

To this fort came the Indian with his buffalo-skins, marten, lynx, mink, ermine, fox, beaver, bear and musquash—precious peltry that would be carried overland by the Company's trusted servants to the shores of Hudson Bay, and from thence shipped to the marts of the world.

And from hence, a hundred years ago, the Indian took away the same articles as are in requisition to-day, except that the make of guns has changed, although

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powder and ball are still used instead of cartridges.

What did he take? Tea, flour, sugar, capotes, cloth, files, awls, knives, needles, scissors, thread, blankets, and steel traps. There might be additions, but they were inconsequential.

The medium of exchange was the beaver skin. It was the trade unit before the beaver were depleted.

Two hundred rabbits were equivalent to twenty-five beaver, and three hundred musk-rats stood for one hundred beaver—and so on through the list.

A pound of tea, an axe, or a fish-hook was worth a stated number of beaver, so that the motto of the company, "*Pro pelle cutem*"—"a skin for a skin"—was not only to be taken literally, but was also characteristic of the fair dealing of the traders with the Indians.

It is true that, in the earlier days, whisky was traded for furs, and a carnival of crime followed. The fort was surrounded by a high, wooden palisade, mounted by bastions in which were stationed brass cannon. Although only stumps of the palisades are now standing, bullets may still be extracted from them, showing there were stormy times in and around the Company's stronghold. It was only when the officials saw there "lode" was likely to be worked out by allowing

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the Indians to become degraded and impoverished, that they cut off the supply of what to this day is known as "hell in a half-pint."

These carousals are frequently and strenuously denied in these days of local option, but the very "old timers" still talk about them.

A little newspaper published thirty years ago by the Hon. Frank Oliver, the present Minister of the Interior, brings the scenes vividly before us. It is an old, brown paper, six inches long by five inches wide. It was printed on a hand-press that had been carried here twelve hundred miles overland, and was the most northerly press on the continent.

Mr. Oliver was writing of the advent of the Mounted Police and of the beneficial changes they had wrought in the territory.

"In no country in the world," he said, "did whisky form a greater portion of the whole trade; in no country were the evil effects resulting from that trade greater; in no country were there more powerful interests or stronger prejudices to be united in its support, and in no country could the enforcing of the law be attended with greater difficulties than in this region of illimitable distances and sparse population. The state of the

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country only a few years ago, when the whisky trade was in full blast, was so deplorable, so utterly different from its present condition, as to almost pass belief. Whisky was the great staple article of trade, both of the Hudson Bay Company and the free traders in this district, and the horses and fur of the Indians and the gold of the miners went to purchase it. A man's life was worth a horse ; and a horse was worth a pint of whisky. Tales are told of strange scenes around Edmonton, where all is so quiet now. Bands of Blackfeet, one thousand strong, howling drunk, with countless buffalo robes and hundreds of horses, crowding around a hole in the wall of the fort, where the whisky was handed out and the robes were taken in, and who would not leave until the last robe was traded.

“ Of horses being bought for whisky by men in the bastions, standing beside loaded cannon, from Indians outside ; and bullets now in the bastion wall hint for strong reasons for the trade being conducted in that way. Of men shot, scalped, disembodied, and cut to pieces in a drunken row within a hundred yards of the wall, of murders and massacres of men, women, and children, with the most revolting details, in full view of the people of the Fort.”

Yet, in spite of this, the Company

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saved a hundred lives for every one they were the means of injuring, in that they supplied the Indian with a market for his furs and gave him food and clothing.

They protected him against famine by allowing him his goods a year in advance of payment.

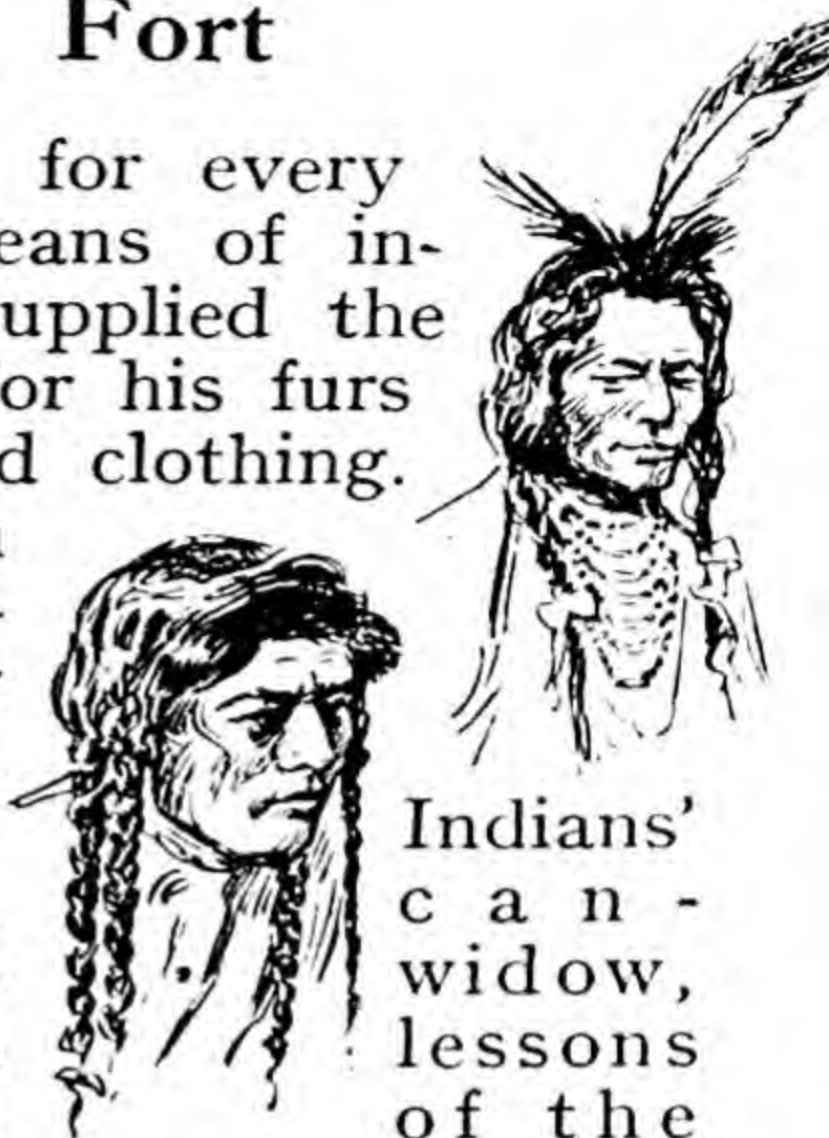
They cared for the sick, fed the starving, celled the debts of the and taught to all useful of thrift, self-help, and

dignity of labour. In truth, the company were "Cæsars with none to contradict them."

Each fort was ruled by a factor, who lived in "The Big House." This was not necessarily a big house, but only meant that the big man lived therein.

The factors are now known as "agents." It is a sad degradation. The word factor was adopted into our language from the Latin, without a modification. It means a man who acts—one who does things. An agent, it seems to me, does not stand for so much. He is only "a half-sir," as the Irish say.

Three years ago The Big House at Edmonton was burned down. It was thirty-two years old, and had been built by Chief Factor Hardisty, whom the Indians



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called "Meekoostakawan," because of his reddish hair.

The previous Big House was erected in the early days of the last century, and was known as "Rowand's Folly," because of its pretentiousness; that is to say, it was three stories high, and had a very large ball-room.

Before Rowand died, he expressed a wish that his bones be sent home to Quebec, for burial. This meant a journey of over three thousand miles by land, and the Indians were not instructed in the art of embalming bodies. What was to be done?

The factor had said his "bones." Here was the solution, and it fell to Koomeniekooos, a Cree chief, to put it into execution.

The Cree boiled the body and picked the bones clean of flesh, then they were ready for transportation. He also ate a piece of the factor's heart, in order that he might inherit his spirit.

One turns over many papers and records to find out what the spirit of Rowand was. This is what I learn. It was told by Joe Macdonald, an old guide, to Katherine Hughes, our provincial archivist.

"Rowand was strong and proud. Yes, men feared him; but we needed no chickens to rule. It was only big-hearted men who could live in those days."

"The Company's Gentlemen" had

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their houses beside the Chief Factor's. These were the clerks and other officials, who were ranked and paid according to their years of service.

These buildings and land are now Government property, having been purchased recently from the Company. The Department of Public Works uses them for storage and office purposes.

The old store is a carpenter's shop. It is a long room, shelved up to the ceiling, with a lean-to at one side. All the lumber was whip-sawed and the beams are rough-hewn, but not with a broad-axe. A small half-door opens into the lean-to, and the trading was probably carried on through this, for the Indians were not allowed access to the goods.

The head carpenter turns on an electric light—ye shades of departed Indians—and shows us where the liquors were stored. It is rumoured that there is a second cellar underneath the first. This is not improbable, for it is hardly to be supposed the Company would risk all their supplies against the possibility of fire or hostile Indians.

The fur-rooms, warehouses, and blacksmith's shop are separate buildings. They are not arts-and-crafts mansions, but were built solidly of logs, lumber, and hand-made shingles. The floors are sunken, the logs rotting, and a general air of decay

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rests over the place. The carpenters, however, are, beginning to repair the ravages of time. They have bound the walls together with steel cables, and have fitted up part of the warehouse as an office—a furnace-heated, electric-lighted office, where Government clerks and stenographers write in big ledgers, or make manifold copies.

No fires were allowed in any of these buildings during the regime of the Company, except in the dwelling houses of the factor and "the Company's Gentlemen." The bricks in the factor's fireplace were brought from England via the Hudson Bay, and are still in use in an Edmonton home.

The windows are protected by wooden shutters, which fasten inside with iron clamps and bolts. The doors and locks are ponderous, and the keys weigh close on a pound each.

The Assembly Hall is upstairs. When, at Christmas, the clerks came in from hundreds of miles, this hall was used for dancing, the floor being specially laid for the purpose. Here, too, the missionaries administered the rites of baptism or performed the marriage service. One of these priests is still living in this district. He is Father Lacombe, the oldest missionary in the West. At the age of 20 he came to Fort Garry,

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and at 25 to Edmonton. He has been here 57 years, and is the Grand Old Man of Protestant and Romanist alike. Standing on the Pisgah of over four score years, his vision is not dim nor the natural force of his reason abated. He is a good man and true—an altogether gentle gentleman.

Other noted people have trod the floors of this big hall. There was Sir George Simpson, the Governor of the Company, who was wont to come to the fort with much ceremony, and to the strains of the bagpipes, in order to impress the Indians. He was the "Great White Chief," and the red men stood in awe of him.

Captain Palliser came hither in 1856, with a company of men who have since become noted in different spheres of life. He was sent out by the British Government to study the resources and possibilities of western Canada.

Lord Southesk, Paul Kane, and Lieutenant Butler, the author of "The Great Lone Land," were also guests in the Assembly Hall.

And here came one lady. She rode a horse from Winnipeg—and she rode astride. She was Lady Percy, the daughter of the Duke of Argyll and sister to the Governor-General, the Marquess of Lorne. She stayed for a fortnight with Mrs. Hardisty, the wife of the factor, as a welcome and greatly honoured guest.

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A walk around the quadrangle is not uninteresting. Here my companion resurrected from a heap of rubbish the enormous wooden screw which was used in the fur-press. He had visited the forts farther north in the sub-arctics, and knew what it was. We also found the wheel of an old Red River cart, that was made without a scrap of iron, and other relics of bygone days and primitive usages.

We peeped into the old powder house. It is solidly built of bricks, and is now used as a rabbit-hutch by the Government analyst.

What is to become of the old fort? In a short time it will be past the possibility of preservation or restoration, I know. On the way home, while this thing was troubling us, we met Premier Rutherford, and told him all that was in our hearts. He assured us it was the intention of his Government to have the place restored and kept in repair, as an heritage for the people.

To the Prime Minister of Alberta the clan of the pen stands at salute!

Long may he reign!

L'ENVOI

And now the time has come when, like Portia, "I wish you well, and so I take my leave."

If I were not so afraid of Messieurs the Publishers, I would like to write more about Edmonton, this place of fascinations where Cree, Christian, and cowboy, trader and trapper, governor and judge, senator and soldier, engineer and explorer, priest, professor, and pioneer, each is doing his best to build up a great city high on the banks of the Saskatchewan.

And it will be a great city ; but, to my way of thinking, never more interesting than to-day, when each man is individualistic and stands alone.

It is good to live in these first days when the foundations of things are being laid, to be able, now and then, to place a stone or carry the mortar to set it good and true.

But, as I said before, there are Messieurs the Publishers ever on the horizon.

I asked the Padre how I should end my book and he said oracularly :

"O ! well, you know, books end in different ways. It might be well to close it with the Doxology or the Old Hundredth."

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He might have helped me, for I always find it hard to back out of a room—either literally or on paper. It is not easy to say good-bye. Indeed, I will not say it. Rather will I voice the warm and gentle chinook that is wont to pass like a benison over Alberta the Sunny, and say to each of you :

“Come West to us, Good Gentleman !
Come West to us, Sweet Lady ! We have
open hearts and open homes for you. Come
West, and let us greet you ! ”

